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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**THE VIOLENT ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION PROCESS:  
A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

by

Karen D. Keys-Turner

December 2011

Thesis Co-Advisors:

Fathali Moghaddam  
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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> December 2011	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process: A Framework for Understanding			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Karen D. Keys-Turner				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB Protocol number N/A				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b> A	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b> The violent Islamic radicalization process is understood differently across disciplines within the homeland security enterprise. Radicalization of U.S. citizens is an emerging threat within the homeland. Current theories and models of the radicalization process offer a linear progression or focus heavily on religious behaviors. When those processes are relied upon to inform policy or procedures for interdiction, civil liberties issues arise. Some theories or models rely on a demographic profile of terrorists. Research suggests that a demographic profile of terrorists is nonexistent. This study analyzes prevailing theories and models that explain radicalization. Using appreciative inquiry, a framework is identified that comprehensively captures the contributions of various theories and models that compose and best explain the dynamics of the radicalization and mobilization process. The identified framework, developed by the National Counterterrorism Center, is comprehensive and suitable for informing training, and counter-radicalization policies and measures within the United States. This research examines radicalization strategies from abroad, as well as studies that identify behavioral indicators of radicalization and mobilization, which establish the basis for future research for behavioral profiling of terrorists. This research recommends a counter-radicalization policy theme that begins with the development of radicalization process expertise and understanding across the homeland security enterprise.				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Radicalization process, Counter-radicalization, Counterterrorism, Social Identity Theory, Mobilization, Model, Framework, Homegrown Violent Extremists, Homeland Security Enterprise, Globalization, Diaspora, Slippery Slope, Pathway to Radicalization, Staircase Metaphor, Behavioral Profiling, Preventive Policing, Behavioral Indicators			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 109	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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**THE VIOLENT ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION PROCESS:  
A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The violent Islamic radicalization process is understood differently across disciplines within the homeland security enterprise. Radicalization of U.S. citizens is an emerging threat within the homeland. Current theories and models of the radicalization process offer a linear progression or focus heavily on religious behaviors. When those processes are relied upon to inform policy or procedures for interdiction, civil liberties issues arise. Some theories or models rely on a demographic profile of terrorists. Research suggests that a demographic profile of terrorists is nonexistent. This study analyzes prevailing theories and models that explain radicalization. Using appreciative inquiry, a framework is identified that comprehensively captures the contributions of various theories and models that compose and best explain the dynamics of the radicalization and mobilization process. The identified framework, developed by the National Counterterrorism Center, is comprehensive and suitable for informing training, and counter-radicalization policies and measures within the United States. This research examines radicalization strategies from abroad, as well as studies that identify behavioral indicators of radicalization and mobilization, which establish the basis for future research for behavioral profiling of terrorists. This research recommends a counter-radicalization policy theme that begins with the development of radicalization process expertise and understanding across the homeland security enterprise.



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AG	Attorney General
AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
CAIR	Council on American-Islamic Relations
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DNI	Director of National Intelligence
DoD	Department of Defense
DOJ	Department of Justice
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HVE	Homegrown Violent Extremist
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IRTPA	Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act
JTTF	Joint Terrorism Task Force
NCTC	National Counterterrorism Center
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
U.S.	United States
UK	United Kingdom
USUHS	Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences



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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge the support of my TSA family Denise, Susan, Dar, Phil and FNT STSOs, LTSOs, and TSOs who backed me up or otherwise “held down the fort” while I worked on homework deadlines and during my educational absence(s) from daily operations. I would also like to acknowledge TSA leadership for supporting this program and supplying the necessary endorsement(s) for my nomination and acceptance into this master’s degree program. The staff and faculty of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School provided an outstanding educational experience and must be acknowledged as well. I would like to extend my thanks to my thesis advisors, Ali and Kathleen for their valuable guidance. Most of all, with much gratitude I must acknowledge the support of my husband Cliff, who never complained about the extensive absences, time, and attention devoted to my studies. Our children and my fellow college students, Brandon and Whitney, deserve acknowledgement for their encouragement and support, as well as their laughing with me as I meandered through this educational endeavor.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. PROBLEM STATEMENT—BACKGROUND**

With regard to immigration within the United States, the conventional wisdom is that immigration policies are largely successful. With respect to American Muslims, a tendency does exist to believe that this population is somewhat insulated from radicalization because they tend to be well integrated into society and generally enjoy a better economic status than their European counterparts. Even though American Muslims are well integrated into society, they remain a target for inspiration by Al Qaeda and its affiliates for radicalization and jihad. Recent events demonstrate that the threat of homegrown terrorism and jihadist inspiration does exist in the United States. Between May 2009 and November 2010, arrests were made for 22 “homegrown” jihadist-inspired terrorist plots by American citizens or legal permanent residents of the United States (Bjelopera & Randol, 2010). A total of 176 Americans have been indicted, arrested, or otherwise identified as terrorists or supporters since 9/11 (Schanzer, Kurzman, & Moosa, 2010). From all accounts, experts agree that Al Qaeda seeks to inspire Americans to implement a campaign of individual jihad from within the United States.

Documents discovered at Osama bin Laden’s compound in Pakistan, where he was killed May 1, 2011, indicate that the leader of Al Qaeda spent his days exhorting his followers to attack the United States and suggesting ways they might do so (Jenkins, 2011). One might ask, “How serious is the threat of homegrown, violent jihadists in the United States?” In May 2010 congressional testimony, terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman stated it is “difficult to be complacent when an average of one plot is now being uncovered per month over the past year or more—and perhaps even more are being hatched that we don’t know about” (Bjelopera & Randol, 2010). A study of domestic Muslim radicalization supported by the National Institute of Justice concluded that, among Muslim Americans, “homegrown terrorism is a serious but limited problem” (Schanzer et al., 2010). It is not widespread amongst American Muslims, although it is a problem existing with a minority of Muslims in the United States. Terrorism expert, Marc

Sageman, opines a global shift in terrorism from centralized operations to decentralized, self-radicalized and autonomous violent jihadists (Sageman, 2008). Nevertheless, there appears to be consensus that this threat merits further review.

Many opinions and studies, as well as current events, indicate that the threat of radicalized U.S. citizens engaging in homegrown violent extremism is real and worthy of addressing. The extent of the threat is not easily estimated; but is of definite concern. Homeland security professionals must be prepared to recognize and respond to this emergent threat. Counter-radicalization is an important sub-component of counterterrorism in the United States and both merit overarching strategies. Homeland security professionals must be prepared to recognize and respond to homegrown violent extremism and radicalization as emergent threats. Consequently, the path of radicalization toward violence is a journey that bears further research to develop a common framework for understanding throughout the homeland security enterprise.

The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (United States, Department of Homeland Security, Press Office, 2011), the U.S. Attorney General (Schanzer et al., 2010), the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (Leiter, 2010), the Secretary of Defense (CNN Press Room, 2011), and repeatedly, the Obama Administration (Obama Administration, 2011), have stated that the threat of homegrown violent extremism is of serious concern. Cases of radicalization in the United States have largely gone undetected until a plot or act of terrorism is in progress or committed. By focusing primarily on religious ideology or linear progressions, many existing process models fail to capture the complexity of the radicalization process fully. Those models have informed the policies and procedures of law enforcement to the detriment of relationships between law enforcement and some Muslim Americans. Without a comprehensive model to guide knowledge of the process of radicalization, counter-radicalization strategies and measures will be unfocused and/or lacking within the homeland security enterprise.

In cases of homegrown violent Islamist terrorism in the United States, such as the Fort Hood shootings, it has become apparent that a common understanding of the violent Islamic radicalization process does not exist. The lack of a commonly agreed-upon theory

of radicalization lends to confusion during, and leading up to, such events. In a speech given at a Muslim center in Virginia in March 2011, Deputy National Security Advisor, Denis McDonough emphasized the importance of a multi-faceted approach to countering violent extremism. He indicated the importance of contesting the radical narrative and appropriate engagement with Muslim Americans. McDonough also laid out a five-point plan for cooperation between the federal government and community leaders that included “*increased efforts to understand the radicalization process*” (Obama Administration, 2011). In effort to increase understanding of the radicalization process, a common model or framework from which to develop training, expertise and policy should be advanced.

## **B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- Is the violent Islamic radicalization process comprehensively modeled in such a way to promote a common conceptual construction of this phenomenon by homeland security professionals<sup>1</sup> and policy makers?
- In what ways can a model of violent Islamic radicalization help develop improved understanding and more effective policies for preventing or otherwise countering violent Islamic radicalization in the United States?

---

<sup>1</sup> Homeland Security components in the context of this research will include all Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and state/local law enforcement, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and the Department of Defense (DoD).

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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Radicalization among Muslims motivated to commit terrorist acts has been identified as a major threat to homeland security in the United States (Bergen & Hoffman, 2010; Neumann, 2011). Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, and Al-Qaeda-inspired persons, pose a threat to the United States as a number of radicalized Islamists reside inside the United States and that number is expected to increase in the coming years (Bergen & Hoffman, 2010). Extremists increasingly exploit the Internet to inspire young Muslims, self-directed Islamists, and converts to Islam who aspire to execute violent acts (Sageman, 2008). Therefore, waging a global campaign against al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates continues to be a primary focus of U.S. counterterrorism policy (The White House, 2010).

In remarks to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs committee in 2010, the then NCTC chief, Michael Leiter, stated, “During the past year our nation has dealt with the most significant developments in the terrorist threat to the Homeland since 9/11. The attack threats are now more complex, and the diverse array of threats tests our ability to respond, and makes it difficult to predict from where the next attack may come” (Ryan & Thomas, 2010). The former NCTC director’s comments referenced the disrupted plot to bomb the New York City subway by Najibullah Zazi (September 2009), the attack at Fort Hood by Army Major Nidal Hasan (November 2009), the attempted Christmas Day bombing of a flight to Detroit by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (December 2009), and the failed bombing in Times Square by Faisal Shahzad (May 2010). In each of those instances, violent Islamic radicalization was indicated. Radicalization was identified in those cases *after* the attempted or actual incidence of terrorism. Threats or incidences, such as these, are disjointed and difficult to predict or counter. Such encounters facilitate the erosion of public confidence in the abilities of homeland security professionals (Leiter, 2010). Such incidents also raise a number of compelling research questions in the area of terrorism in general, and radicalization, in particular.



Research regarding the radicalization process in the West and how it might lead to terrorism has gained momentum and renewed interest since the 9/11 attacks (Kean et al., 2004). The psyche of terrorists, who becomes a terrorist, and why persons become terrorists in the first place, has long been a topic of study. Research conducted based on the false premise that terrorists are psychopaths or sociopaths has been reviewed and repeatedly refuted (Shaw, 1986). Other experts view terrorism as a tactic or a strategy of psychological influence (Post, 1990), or “politically motivated violence, perpetrated by individuals, groups, or state-sponsored agents, intended to bring about feelings of terror and helplessness in a population in order to influence decision-making and to change behavior” (Moghaddam, 2006). Overwhelming research concludes that terrorists do not typically appear to be psychopaths or sociopaths. Conversely, terrorists often present a heightened sense of purpose (Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009). In fact, many terrorists do not consider themselves terrorists at all; they often consider themselves martyrs or freedom fighters.

When considering this issue from the terrorist’s perspective, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” (Hoffman, 1998). The research on radicalization outlines or metaphorically illustrates the process by which individuals move from simply holding radical beliefs, escalate to the point of extremist ideology, and justify violence to instigate social or political change. In the United States, the radicalization and terrorism research that has gained momentum since the attacks on The World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 (9/11) has focused on a range of contributing factors, from individual personality characteristics to globalization processes as ‘spurring’ radicalization and terrorism (Moghaddam, 2008). For example, it has been argued that the ‘new global insecurity’ (Moghaddam, 2010) will result in more terrorism such as that which occurred in Norway on July 22, 2011, when a 32-year old white Norwegian man killed and seriously injured hundreds of people to defend Norway from the ‘Islamic invasion.’

Upon analysis of extremism in the United States, it appears that existing radicalization trends toward self-radicalized or homegrown violent extremists (HVE)

who consume, buy-in to, and propagate the radical narrative.<sup>2</sup> HVE are a smaller subset of those with radical Islamic views within the United States who commit to the ideology to the extent of actually committing violent acts or crimes. Since 9/11, at least 46 cases of domestic radicalization and recruitment to jihadist terrorism in the United States have been reported (Jenkins, 2010). Although the process of radicalization is not understood in a standard way or agreed upon across disciplines, an agreement in the literature does exist that radicalization is a process that happens gradually, or at least, ‘step by step’ in a ratchet manner, and exiting from the terrorist path becomes more and more difficult as the person moves further along (Moghaddam, 2005a).

Researchers have not precisely determined the causes of violent radicalization or identified how that gradual process happens so much as they have broadly identified factors that may contribute to it. Much of the work done in this area is relative to the causes and precursors of terrorism. This study views radicalization as an often prerequisite to terrorism; a gradual process from radical views, to extremist ideology, to mobilization, and ending in the commission of acts of terrorism intended to cause socio-political change through the use of acts, which cause fear or terror.

While some theorize that the process leading to terrorism is due to psychopathology, sociopathic or mental illness (Post, 1990), other researchers view radicalization as a by-product of group identity or social interactions and processes (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) or as part of a ‘collective identity crisis’ in the Islamic world (Moghaddam, 2006). Others view radicalization primarily as a result of globalization of commerce, travel, and information transfer, which spurs economic disparities and ideological competition (Victoroff, 2005; Moghaddam, 2008). World issues, socio-political domestic and foreign policy or grievances that cause Islamophobia, religionization and marginalization of Muslims are also surmised to incite radicalization (Khan, Chehab, & Qassim, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> Homegrown violent extremists, for purposes of this paper, are considered those persons born, raised, or based within a targeted country that materially support, advocate, or perpetrate ideologically motivated acts of terrorism from within the targeted nation.

When the process of radicalization is approached from a psychological perspective, it trends toward an examination of the socio-psychological composition of terrorists. Many of those theories fall into a top-down approach, which theorizes that terrorism is spurred by political, social, economic or even evolutionary circumstances, or bottom-up approaches that explore the characteristics of individuals and groups that turn to terrorism to explain or identify root causes (Victoroff, 2005). More contemporary non-empirical analysis of the pathway through radicalization to terrorism from a law enforcement/intelligence perspective suggests a linear progression from radicalization to terrorism (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). This process theory is also known as the “religious conveyor belt” theory as it cites Islamic mosques as “incubators,” which cultivate the process of radicalization and relies primarily on religion as a driver. Practices based on this theory have been fraught with complaints of civil rights violations and has caused schisms between U.S. law enforcement, the FBI and American Muslims. Even though this research was updated in 2009 to indicate that it was not meant to be the basis for policy, practices based on it had already caused numerous concerns.

The Dutch government indicates “push and pull” factors believed to propagate the extremist ideology. Push factors are forces that can alienate people or cause them to reject mainstream society, such as a lack of access to education or gainful employment, and difficulty with social integration or perceived discrimination. Pull factors are described as appeals from terrorist networks or radicals, such as propaganda or trigger events, and attacks or assassinations against Muslim populations that draw persons to accept the extremist ideology. In addition to the push and pull factors, the Dutch contend that three primary motivational factors often lead to radicalization. Those motivational factors are young people looking for meaning, seeking to establish a bond or gaining recognition and, individuals who perceive an injustice inflicted upon themselves or other similarly situated persons (Heyman, Gordon, & Watson, 2009). A step-wise progression to radicalization and terrorism has also been proposed using a narrowing staircase metaphor (Moghaddam, 2005a). Each of these theories furthers the thought that social identity and/or other social dynamics impacts the process of radicalization.

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Laura Grossman conducted an empirical examination of the radicalization process wherein they analyzed changes in behavioral characteristics of 117 Islamic homegrown terrorists in the United States (U.S.) and the United Kingdom (UK) who perpetrated or attempted to perpetrate, or support terrorism through October 2008 (Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009). Their study added six behaviors, or behavioral changes to the research that can be identified in persons transitioning through the process of radicalization to violent extremism or terrorism. Research by Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko supposes the mechanisms, circumstances and symptoms that surround the process of radicalization (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011) that correlate with some of the behaviors found in the Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman study.

Dr. Peter Neumann, Director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London (Cutler, 2011), opines, "While varying models have been developed to describe the process by which individuals develop extremist worldviews, three elements are common to each model: grievance, ideology, and mobilization." Additionally, some contend that Muslim radicalization and homegrown terrorism is driven primarily by U.S.-Middle East international politics (M. A. M. Khan et al., 2010). From radicalization theories that blend individual and group dynamics and point to social push and pull factors interacting with the individual psychology of terrorists or even social-motivation factors as causes or precipitators of violent radicalization (Heyman et al., 2009) to those that look to a macro-perspective (M. A. M. Khan et al., 2010), indeed, a lack of clear consensus on what motivates an individual to become radicalized and eventually commit violent acts exists. What is known is that a radicalization process exists, "*Terrorists are made, they are not born*" (Moghaddam, 2006, p. 45). It has also become apparent that no specific profile exists for all terrorists (Jenkins, 2010). Additionally, not all radicalized individuals become terrorists and/or commit violent acts (Heyman et al., 2009). Indeed, almost a century of psychological research states that what people express in words, including making (or not making) 'radical statements', does not necessarily translate into actual behavior (Moghaddam, 1998).

Notwithstanding the various models and theories reviewed in this thesis, the process of radicalization remains an important subject of emerging research. No standard path from and through radicalization to violence is clear. Radicalization is not always a certain step on the path to violent extremism, nor is it always the first step toward it. It is understood that many persons subscribe to a radical ideology, but never commit a violent act for the purpose of furthering, or bringing attention to that ideology. Often times, research references the path to terrorism and the path to radicalization as one and the same. “To be a radical is to reject the status quo, but not necessarily in a violent or even problematic manner. Even though the last decade in particular has also seen a growth in many types of non-violent radicalization, the process of radicalization is obviously a problem when it leads to violence, and most obviously to al-Qaeda inspired terrorism” (Bartlett, Birdwell, & King, 2010), which is the subject of this research.

Based on analysis of cases of radicalized persons in the United States, it is obvious that the demographic of this population is diverse; no “cookie cutter” profile exists. Most are U.S. citizens, some are first second-, or third-generation male immigrants of Islamic descent between the ages of 18–30. Some perpetrators have been converts to Islam of various ethnic origins. The ages of the 31 jihadists named in the 2010 cases in the United States range from 19 to 63 years. Not surprisingly, those joining terrorist groups abroad or plotting to execute terrorist attacks in the United States tend to be six or seven years younger than those charged with providing material support (Jenkins, 2011; Moghaddam, 2006), which fits the known profiles of ‘terrorist specializations’ as per (Moghaddam, 2006, ch. 8). Female, as well as male terrorists do operate in the United States. Colleen LaRose,<sup>3</sup> who referred to herself as “Jihad Jane” and “Fatima LaRose,” is a convert to Islam who was convicted of terrorist acts (“2nd Woman Guilty in ‘Jihad Jane’ Case,” 2011). Although a majority of the perpetrators of terrorist acts in the United States have origins in Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia, Hispanics and equal numbers of Caucasians and African-Americans have also conducted terrorist acts.

---

<sup>3</sup> Colleen LaRose pleaded guilty on February 1, 2011 to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, conspiracy to kill in a foreign country, making false statements, and attempted identity theft.

Nearly all of the domestically radicalized terrorists in the United States in the recent past have been Muslims or converts to Islam (Jenkins, 2010).

Of those terrorists, “few of America’s accused terrorists seem to have arrived at jihadism through a process of profound spiritual discernment. The attraction of the jihadists’ extremist ideology for these individuals appears to have had more to do with participating in action than with religious instruction.” (Jenkins, 2010)

As a subset of radical Islamists, HVEs or self-radicalized terrorists appear to have diverse endgames. Many do not appear to be interested in martyrdom any more than they are interested in making a statement on behalf of their ideology or grievances. They also possess various skills sets and capabilities (Bjelopera & Randol, 2010). The tipping point at which these individuals turn from radicalism to terrorism is difficult to detect as their intent is not readily observed and capabilities are a challenge to assess. The assessment of radical versus terrorist intent and capabilities requires a number of information collection methods including surveillance, which might seemingly encroach upon the civil rights of citizens without intent or capabilities to commit crimes. Generally, subject matter experts agree that behavioral, sociological and, psychological factors contribute to the path toward radicalization.

The literature paints a picture of political, psychological and sociological motivators, some demographic themes but certainly not a solid demographic profile, and behaviors that may present or serve as indicators of, or at least characteristics that might facilitate identifying pathways to, radicalization. It also identifies some challenges to discerning radicalization and what to do about it before a crime is committed. Many recommendations and observations have been made; however, a lack of a clear strategic approach to addressing the issue of homegrown terrorism and radicalization in the United States exists.

## **A. THESIS STATEMENT**

Divergent paths through, and progressions within, the complex process of violent Islamic radicalization occur. Identifiable behavioral patterns and combinations of indicators exist within the measured process of violent Islamic radicalization that can be

exploited for purposes of detection, prevention, mitigation, interdiction and intervention. Modeling or developing a framework of the violent Islamic radicalization process can facilitate the development of a common understanding of the process by homeland security professionals and policymakers. Upon cultivation of that commonly understood framework within which violent Islamic radicalization occurs, homeland security professionals and policymakers can better effectuate strategies, policies, processes and procedures for the detection, interdiction, mitigation and prevention of violent Islamic radicalization. A common context from which to communicate about the radicalization process will contribute to more effective collaboration and information sharing across the homeland security enterprise.

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH**

The killing of Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden on May 2, 2011, in addition to the killing of two leaders in the spread of extremist ideology, contributor to and author of Al Qaeda's *Inspire* on-line magazine, Anwar Al-Awlaki and Samir Khan, both killed on September 30, 2011, dealt major blows to core Al Qaeda and affiliated leadership (Schone & Cole, 2011). Yet, Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, continues to believe that Yemen is the biggest terror threat to the United States when questioned about the terrorist threat remaining with Al Qaeda (CNN Press Room, 2011). While it appears that the capabilities of core Al Qaeda have been diminished, no evidence exists that it has abandoned its mission to continue to conduct and inspire terrorist activities in the West. Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign has evolved from centrally planned and directed large-scale attacks to a growing emphasis on individual jihad and do-it-yourself terrorism by homegrown violent extremists (Jenkins, 2011). The various understandings of this threat and the lack of a policy-based approach to countering the threat of radicalization in the United States requires addressing.

No single common and comprehensive model of the violent Islamic radicalization process that homeland security and law enforcement officials commonly embrace exists. This leads to divergent understandings and practices in combating terrorism. Some of those practices have caused schisms between Muslim Americans and law enforcement

(FBI). Muslim Americans have resented infiltration and surveillance of mosques based on the religious conveyor belt theory, which characterized mosques as incubators of radical ideology that churns out terrorists. This research first identifies the possible policy benefits of developing a model of violent Islamic radicalization. A second goal is to review and analyze the most prevalent theories and combine the most sound themes and principles associated with radicalization into a single framework, which can be used across disciplines as a basis for improved understanding of the violent Islamic radicalization process and the development of sound counter-radicalization practices, policies and procedures.



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### III. METHODOLOGY

A number of theories and models attempt to describe how the violent Islamic radicalization process<sup>4</sup> occurs. Finding a methodology through which to discover a new or more comprehensive process model of radicalization is an arduous task at best. Some agreement exists in terms of some factors or dynamics within the process. Most theorists agree that the social identity factor exists and must be noted in the process. Disagreement exists regarding the primary components of the violent radicalization process and no standard process model, framework, or basis of understanding about the radicalization process from which all U.S. governmental and homeland security components function exists.

Existing models encompass global, situational, social, psychological or behavioral motivators and factors. However, in most cases, theories or models do not acknowledge the synthesis of a multitude of disciplines and factors embedded in the radicalization process. Existing models of the radicalization process tend to identify stages or steps in the process, which might be interpreted as a set of prescriptive, sequenced steps. Research indicates no single path of radicalization exists, and prescriptive sequenced steps are difficult to validate as sequences and progression vary by case. A conceptual framework identifying combinations of factors and characteristics, which might combine to cause or promote radicalization and terrorism, would contribute best to the study of this phenomenon.

In terms of root causes of radicalization and terrorism, research indicates that permissive and precipitant factors exist (Crenshaw, 1981; Noricks et al., 2009) that set the stage for, or help to catalyze or trigger radicalization or acts of violence. Crenshaw, and subsequently, Noricks describe permissive factors as synonymous with preconditions, which are traditional factors that set the stage for terrorism over time.

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<sup>4</sup> The Islamic radicalization process is described as a gradual transformation from a non-violent and religiously based understanding and practice of the Islamic faith to one with a violent, religious and politically based ideology hinged on the belief that the West is at war with Islam and the only viable solution for the survival of Islam is to perpetrate acts of violence to influence societal and/or political change.

Noricks categorizes permissive factors into those that are global, state, or socio-culturally oriented. Factors, such as marginalization, disenfranchisement and economic inequality or other perceived grievances, are examples of permissive factors or preconditions, which congeal to form the milieu for radicalization. These factors must be dissected and identified in the radicalization process. Crenshaw and Noricks describe a precipitant factor as an incident or event that catalyzes or triggers a behavior change or moves toward violence. Precipitant events or incidents may give new life to, or otherwise, feed into existing grievances. Such factors should also be reflected in process models or frameworks used to further develop understanding of the violent Islamic radicalization process.

The methodology in this thesis hopes to use inductive reasoning to identify a new model or framework of the radicalization process. Current models fail to account for the diversity of paths to, and the variety of precipitants, preconditions and other factors that might influence a given case of radicalization to violence. To facilitate and further the understanding of this complex process of radicalization, this research takes a qualitative approach to examining models and theories of this phenomenon. Radicalization can occur as a group process or individually through a self-driven process or via recruitment. Process models, frameworks and theories should account for the phenomenon of lone-wolf radicalization scenarios as an important process to understand as radicalization goes. Many theories lack insight into the nuances of the radicalization process that drives the lone wolf.<sup>5</sup> Thus, some models and theories postulate the radicalization process too simplistically.

This qualitative review of the body of process theories and disciplinary approaches to this wicked problem of violent Islamic radicalization in the West attempts to build understanding of the various characteristics, factors, triggers, catalysts, inhibitors, precipitants, precursors and permissive factors that might spur radicalization and terrorism through appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry builds upon the contributions of prevalent theories and processes to the understanding of the violent

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<sup>5</sup> Lone wolves for purposes of this research are those individuals who radicalize and escalate to terrorism in the absence of others, such as a recruiter, advisor, or group of friends.

Islamic radicalization process. Building upon the prevailing understanding and identifying the various factors involved in the radicalization process furthers research and policy development within the homeland security enterprise.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) would advocate a grounded theory methodological approach to researching this issue as most desirable in terms of beginning with previous data, theories and models to develop a new theoretical model or framework of the radicalization process. However, limits arise because primary terrorism and radicalization research data are seriously lacking. Data and information from the perspectives of actual radicalized persons or perpetrators of terrorist acts are required in a grounded theory study and not available in this case. Therefore, this research utilizes an appreciative inquiry approach to analyze or examine the content of available theories comparatively to identify the contributions of the various theories and approaches and synthesize the contributions from various disciplines and theories to develop a new model or framework. From the new framework, a customary understanding of the process of violent Islamic radicalization can be cultivated and acted upon throughout the homeland security enterprise.

Some of the more prevalent, comprehensive and useful theoretical models of the violent Islamic radicalization process are selected and analyzed in this research. By conducting a comparative content analysis of radicalization process theories on: 1) the basis (micro-level, mid-level or blended and macro-level), 2) discipline approach (psychological, social psychology, sociological, political science, socio-economic), 3) permissive factors, 4) framing and, 5) contributions and limitations of existing process models as per Table 1, this research considers and builds on viable facets of those models to advance a comprehensive conceptual framework of violent Islamic radicalization.

Table 1. Comparative Content Analysis of Radicalization Process Theories and Models

<b>Basis</b>	<b>Discipline Approaches<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Trajectory<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Permissive Factors<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Framing<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Theories Reviewed</b>
Macro-Level	Political Science	Top-Down	Global	Motivational	Globalization, Diaspora
	Sociological Economic				
Mid-Level	Socio-psychological	Blended (Top-Down/Bottom-Up)	State	Motivational & Rational Actor	Silber & Bhatt, NCTC, Musa & Bendett, Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, McCauley & Moskalenko
	Religious				
Micro-Level	Psychological	Bottom-Up	Socio-cultural	Rational Actor	Social Identity Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Staircase to Terrorism Metaphor
	Behavioral				

The analysis begins with a review of what this thesis terms micro-level process theories, or those that focus primarily on factors particular to the individual to explain radicalization and terrorism. Next, an analysis of mid-level process theories is conducted that focuses on both the individual and social identity dynamics to explain the motivators

<sup>6</sup> Different disciplines approach the question of radicalization and terrorism in significantly different ways. Psychological approaches need to include behavioral and rational choice paradigms, social psychology, sociological perspectives and political-science approaches to include globalization (Noricks et al., 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Attempts to account for the behavior of terrorists fall into two general categories: top-down approaches that seek the seeds of terrorism in political, social, economic, or even evolutionary circumstances and bottom-up approaches that explore the characteristics of individuals and groups that turn to terrorism (Victoroff, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Darcy Noricks uses three categories of permissive factors used to explain types of radicalization that are useful in this context. Global factors, such as military affairs and foreign policy issues, state factors due to state social structures that might cause issues, such as unemployment, discrimination and marginalization which fuel radicalization, and socio-cultural factors that include ideology, culture and identity (Noricks et al., 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Carrie Rosefsky Wickham describes two schools of thought. The rational actor school of thought is that individual involvement in violent social movements is motivated by the socio-psychological benefits of membership. The motivational framing school of thought contends that ideology is the primary motivator for joining socio-religious movements (Cozzens, 2006).

for radicalization and terrorism. Lastly, macro-level grievances and situational factors that may promote radicalization, or at least, instigate or inflame the process, such as globalization and issues of immigration or Diasporas are the focus. The order of the analysis is not meant to infer a causal or correlation ranking, but is more so an orderly way to proceed through the analysis.

Ideally, cultivating a comprehensive radicalization process framework that includes identifiable behavioral anchors would facilitate the identification of points of interdiction, mitigation or prevention within the process for purposes of appropriate counter-radicalization strategies, processes, policies and procedures. The result of the comparative content analysis of radicalization process theories is to establish a framework as the basis for future policy development. Additional investigation is necessary to determine the degree to which the factors identified are present and/or influence any particular case. Note, however, that every factor identified may not be mutable (Noricks et al., 2009) or prone to change or influence by counterterrorism or counter-radicalization policy or procedures. However, the goal is to better define and develop the process through modeling, with the intent to identify opportunities within the radicalization process susceptible to influence a change of course.

A primary limitation of this and most studies on radicalization and terrorism is limited data and a lack of primary data. Subjects who have undergone the process of radicalization might be less than cooperative in detailing the factors contributing to their journey on the path of radicalization. Those currently on the path of radicalization are, for obvious reasons, not available subjects of study. Analysis must, therefore, be gleaned from various sources. A lack of empirical rigor in most studies of radicalization and terrorism is obvious. Essentially, no experimental and control groups for a solid comparative approach to the study of terrorism exists. This research is based on theories, models and frameworks primarily derived from the analysis of case studies. The data analyzed is gathered primarily from open source data about the cases, subject to analysis and interpretation.

The information relied upon for this and most studies on radicalization and terrorism is from secondary sources, such as information found in the press, or other open sources. Analysis of characteristics of radicalized persons, post-terrorism event may not accurately reflect those motivators or precipitators that drew them in to the radicalization process, nor those that maintained the process once it began. A multitude of motivators, tipping points, and behaviors combine to comprise the gradual process of radicalization and trajectory toward terrorism. This research will acknowledge the importance and contributions of the applicable disciplines and theories that apply. A multitude of disciplines and theories are involved in most cases of radicalization. This research can also assist in dispelling the notion that a typical terrorist profile and a set of prescribed steps or stages in the radicalization process exists. Radicalization is clearly a complex process and cannot be simplified to that degree.

There is a compelling reason to dispel the notion that a profile of a typical terrorist exists and that there are prescribed steps on the path of radicalization. This notion has caused concerns within the Muslim community as Muslim Americans allege profiling and surveillance because of their religion. The blowback (Lowenthal, 2009) of such operations are accusations of violations of civil rights and liberties of law abiding citizens and detrimental effects on community and law enforcement relations that hinders cooperation between the two entities. The problem is that it is almost impossible to profile this adversary (Hoffman, Rosenau, Curiel, & Zimmermann, 2006). Terrorists are not always of Middle Eastern descent. Nor, are terrorists always those with criminal pasts or the less educated. Understanding the radicalization process in a customary way will facilitate the development of practices, policies and procedures that do not rely on a misguided understanding of the radicalization process.

Islamic religious practices are not an indicator upon which to profile by infiltrating mosques. Many convicted terrorists were converts who may or may not be affiliated with a mosque. Shoe bomber Richard Reid, for example, was a convert to Islam who was expelled from his place of worship. Therefore, experts are more inclined to agree, “mosques are not the problem because mosques are not recruiting individuals. Basements, backrooms, bookshops, youth clubs, the Internet, and other informal

institutions are what we must focus on” (Hoffman et al., 2006). Religious or ethnic profiling can risk alienation within the Muslim community. Alienation of the Muslim community may act as a permissive factor by spurring distrust of authorities and furthering proliferation of ideological causes of radicalization. Consideration of the various facets of the radicalization process can facilitate the eventual identification and isolation of those factors most and least amenable to policy influence (Noricks et al., 2009) and the greatest opportunities for intervention.



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## **IV. FINDINGS**

### **A. ANALYSIS OF MICRO-LEVEL ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION PROCESS THEORIES**

Micro-level Islamic radicalization process theories focus primarily on the individual and individual characteristics, factors, and situations as the basis for radicalization.

In the study of terrorism, a considerable amount of research has been, and continues to be conducted, in terms of identifying who becomes a terrorist, and why. Some researchers theorize that the propensity to become a terrorist is within the individual psyche. Such theories are based on the premise that innate personality characteristics including behavioral and particular situational characteristics of a person are what contribute to radicalization and eventual acts of terrorism. The key element of that line of thought, that terrorism is due to the psyche, has been proven untrue. The premise that some behavioral characteristics (e.g., the thrill of excitement and risk taking) coupled with situational characteristics of a person, can contribute to radicalization appears incomplete. Trying to ‘bake’ a terrorist with only those ingredients would result in a recipe that would be far from complete.

Looking at radicalization as a prerequisite to terrorism may assist in the discernment of indications as to the radicalization process, and thereby, uncover opportunities for mitigation, intervention or prevention. Viewing radicalization as a prerequisite does not imply that radicalization inevitably leads to acts terrorism in every case however; terrorist acts do not usually occur without some form or trigger of radicalization preceding it. Some of the early terrorism research identified terrorism and the process of becoming a terrorist as a type of psychopathy, or mental disorder.

Psychologists have studied the personalities and backgrounds of terrorists to identify common experiences that might shape the psyche of those who commit terrorist acts. More than 30 years of such research has found little evidence that terrorists generally suffer from psychopathology. In fact, the findings of Wilfried Rasch (1979), as

cited by (Shaw, 1986), appear to support the idea that the personal qualities required for political terrorism may actually screen out persons with psychopathology. That research profited by what now amounts to hundreds of interviews with terrorists and thorough, systematic reviews of the backgrounds of terrorists (McCauley, 2002). The commitment to cause and sense of righteousness and conviction of terrorists are inconsistent with that of psychopaths. Therefore, that thinking has been disproved based on further analysis and understanding of, not only the individual, but also the group dynamics affecting individual behavior. The sources of terrorism are much more complex than can adequately be described by diagnostic labels (Shaw, 1986). Shaw notes that social identity issues might lead to social conflict, setbacks or failures. However, membership in a terrorist group may meet the personal needs of individuals unable to find a niche in traditional society and is a common theme with many who radicalize or join terrorist cells.

### **1. Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory has grown out of the discipline of social psychology, and is categorized as a micro-level theory as it concerns individual interactions within a social environment. This theory views behavior from the social-psychological perspective of intergroup relations and provides a link between situations and behavior (Tajfel, 1981). An understanding of social identity theory within the context of radicalization and terrorism facilitates an understanding of the socio-psychological dynamics of individuals and groups as they radicalize. The trajectory toward radicalization in this context is bottom-up, which examines the process through rational actor framing. Social identity theories describe a situation in which a person has not one, “personal self,” but rather several selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership. In the case of radicalization, groups of like-minded friends, religious study groups, or cultural communities all represent different social settings and social identities within those settings.

Different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act based on a personal, family or national “level of self” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It has been

suggested that cultural, social and personal identity processes underlie terrorism (Schwartz et al., 2009). Cultural identity has to do with specific cultural values. Cultural mores, such as collectivism, which involves prioritizing the group or collective over self, may be the basis of a cultural identity supportive of martyrdom. Social identity is based on one's significance to and within various groups to which a person belongs. Theory contends that the various levels of self-identity cause individuals to create an in-group in which they categorize themselves. Personal identity represents one's chosen or ascribed goal, values, and beliefs, and the personal perspectives used to make sense of the world (Schwartz et al., 2009).

The individual, group, and to some extent cultural (Islamist) identities, are of particular concern in the violent Islamic radicalization process. Group dynamics occur in terms of consideration of individual interaction with others and the development of in-group and out-group thinking and actions based therein. As individuals, people liken the good in others to characteristics of themselves and those with whom they have characteristics in common. Within the radicalization process, individuals come to develop a personal identity that justifies their group membership and establishes their within-group identity while developing a disdain for the culture and members of the out-group. People label groups to which they belong as the in-group because of the desire to be considered in the best light. Conversely, an out-group is established and individuals favor the in-group over the out-group and positively differentiate the in-group from the out-group by ascribing positive characteristics to the in-group and negative characteristics to the out-group.

What social identity theory contributes to the study of radicalization and terrorism is an understanding of the socio-psychological dynamics occurring at the micro-level during the process of moving from moderate views, to extremists views, to terrorist actions on an individual level (personal identity) and how the group and cultural identities are defined, refined or redefined within that process. In as much as the study of radicalization and terrorism sometimes assumes a tendency to describe the reasons behind the actions of terrorists to inherent characteristics, when viewing that tendency through the lens of social-psychology and the social identity theory, it is termed the

*fundamental attribution error* (Ross, 1977; Shaw, 1986). Fundamental attribution error is the tendency of people to explain behavior in terms of internal, dispositional causes and to overlook or ignore situational factors (Bongar, Brown, Beutler, Breckenridge, & Zimbardo, 2007). This concept explains the reasoning or propensity for others to describe terrorists as pathological, socio-paths, or otherwise flawed, as terrorist behaviors appear to be far outside the realm of the norm. It is important to recognize that within the process of radicalization, very “normal” socio-psychological processes occur and social roles and structures interact with “ordinary psychological processes common to most people to disengage or diffuse their natural moral restraints” (Bandura, 1999).

Social identity theory lends to the understanding of both the individual and group dynamic occurring in the radicalization process. The personal, social and cultural identity factors of persons on the journey to radicalization should be acknowledged as critical to understanding the process. A framework of the radicalization process useful for promoting a common understanding of the process should be structured to acknowledge the role of identity as a factor. As radicals and extremists have already been established as generally being absent manifestations of psychopathology, social factors that can impact radicalization should also be considered. Rational choices must be made during the pre-operational point within the radicalization process. This is the point when an individual contemplates how, whether, and what type of actions might be invoked when flirting with the tactic of terrorism.

This point in the process is important because exposure and access to capabilities may influence whether or if someone advances further in the process. The considerations of operational capabilities and access by a radicalized group/cell or individual do not occur typically by happenstance. As terrorism is viewed as a tactic employed by radicalized or extremist groups and individuals, it is useful for analysis and greater understanding to view some acts of terrorism as a methodology of rational choice, born out of capabilities and the circumstances of the group or individual.

## 2. Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory was originally developed within the school of microeconomics and assumes that the behavior of individuals is based on pros and cons or a cost-benefit analysis. This is a micro-level theory, which assumes a bottom-up trajectory based on socio-cultural permissive factors. This theory approaches terrorism as political behavior based on measured choices by terrorists as rational actors, and considers the psychological variables that might either encourage or inhibit participation in terrorist activities (Crenshaw, 1981). This theory views terrorist organizations as reasoning entities that weigh means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choice. This theory is useful for exploring radicalization through the lens of motivational framing. The motivators within rational choice theory are *preconditions*, factors that set the stage for terrorism over the long run, and *precipitants*, specific events that immediately precede the occurrence of terrorism (Crenshaw, 1981). As preconditions and precipitants are altered, so is the trajectory of radicalization toward terrorism. A central point to rational choice theory is that changes in the rules of the game (preconditions and precipitants) can alter the behavior of the players.

The point at which rational choice theory becomes most critical to the radicalization process is the point at which an individual's extremist beliefs drive that person to consider action. Rational choices are made at that point in terms of considering capabilities (training and skills set, for example, small arms as opposed to explosives), opportunities (access to venues, targets, and potential impact), and what action can be taken to induce the desired objectives. The capabilities and mobilization considerations phase or point is more salient in some theories or models of radicalization than others. Research suggests operational or mobilization phases or cycles within the radicalization process should be viewed distinctively. For more information, see the works of Clutterbuck and Warnes (2011), The National Counterterrorism Center (2011), Cozzens (2006), Silber and Bhatt (2007), and Musa and Bendett (2010). The objectives of terrorism per the rational choice paradigm are to acquire political influence, gain a

reaction or recognition or attention for a cause, and/or disrupt or discredit the processes of government, or weaken government operations by impairing normal operations (Crenshaw, 1981).

Behavioral psychology is also an important consideration within the framework of radicalization as its premise corresponds to some extent with rational choice theory. This school of thought, primarily developed by B. F. Skinner (Noricks et al., 2009), views behavior as contingent upon its consequences. Therefore, the consequences of behaviors exhibited within the process of radicalization reward, motivate, encourage and further escalate the process. Individuals choose those actions that produce desirable consequences. Consequently, if an individual behaves in such a way and receives financial, religious, social status, excitement, friendship and/or ideological rewards on the path of radicalization to terrorism, those behaviors will likely be maintained. Not only will those behaviors be sustained, but they also will shape or form the basis of future behaviors. This perspective of the dynamics of human behavior contributes to this research recognition of behaviors and inherent reward systems within the process of radicalization. If the behavior reward system (*behavioral contingencies*) can be interrupted, an opportunity arises to influence additional behaviors.

Complimentary to rational choice and behaviorism theories is social movement theory, which explains how social movements occur. Terrorism, when viewed as a social movement caused by grievance within the frame of social movement theory, portrays terrorists and terrorist groups as rational actors who respond to various inducements, and not only those outlined by rational choice theory. These inducements would include social and historical conditions, as well as group and organizational dynamics, personal leadership, group membership and ideological factors that together produces, “a disaffected individual, an enabling community, and a legitimizing ideology” (Bartlett et al., 2010). Further, in light of the resources mobilization theory, in which the actual grievances are not always the primary draw to the movement itself; consider that until 9/11, conventional wisdom held that terrorists were not interested in killing but in

publicity (Hoffman, 1998). Terrorist violence can be viewed through these social dynamics as more of a means of pursuing publicity and recruiting supporters by bringing attention to their cause than about violence itself.

Experts in the study of radicalization and terrorism concur that no generally agreed upon “terrorist profile” or common income, education and radicalization path exists; these factors have proven to be divergent. Psychiatrist Marc Sageman describes in his book, *Leaderless Jihad* (Sageman, 2008), a network of “self-radicalized jihadists who are more dispersed and self-organize to carry out attacks that are instigated and/or facilitated by interactions on the internet.” He opines that Diaspora Middle Eastern Muslims may feel alienated, seek companionship and form small groups or cliques of like-minded peers and those social interactions spur group cohesion and the development of a collective identity. These groups sometimes become consumers of radical messaging via the Internet, and involve socialization with persons associated with the proliferation of the radical narrative.

This notion comports with the dynamics of social identity theory and behaviorism, which contributes to the understanding of the radicalization process, in that Sageman promotes the idea that similar behaviors or behavioral patterns can be associated with radicalization. Involvement with groups that espouse a radical narrative, radical internet messaging, as well as travel to foreign countries where suspected Al Qaeda training camps may exist, are some *behavioral indicators* that radicalization may be occurring, has occurred, or is escalating to the point of mobilization. Caution should be exercised with this view to the extent that these behaviors alone do not indicate radicalization, but when viewed within the appropriate context and in combination with other factors, may indicate radicalization.

Another professor of psychiatry who has weighed in on the discourse regarding radicalization and terrorism is Dr. Jerrold M. Post, who concurs that no one terrorist mindset exists and that diverse motivations among terrorist causes and groups are present. Post contends that “rather than individual psychology, then, what emerges as the most powerful lens through which to understand terrorist behavior is that of group, organizational, and social psychology, with a particular emphasis on collective identity”



(Post, 2007). Post cites the Chinese strategist Sun Tzu, “What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy’s strategy....Next best is to disrupt alliances...,” (Post, 2003). He uses Sun Tzu’s quote to promote the idea of psychological operations (PSYOP) as a counterterrorism strategy.

Post suggests winning hearts and minds via a campaign of discourse that would essentially focus on a policy of deterring potential terrorists from joining terrorist cells. He advocates causing dissension within the ranks of terrorist cells, as well as facilitating exit from the path of terrorism. He also recommends reducing external support for terrorism (Post, 1990). This philosophy contributes a suggested method for countering terrorism to the radicalization and terrorism research, by promoting counter-radicalization through developing an understanding of how best to influence or interrupt the process. A comprehensive counter-radicalization strategy must definitely include elements intended for countering and contesting the radical narrative, which is a lesson to be learned from the evolution of the UK’s Prevent program. To take such an approach, it is crucial to understand completely the processes of individual and group radicalization and the intense social dynamics therein. This research endeavors to support that premise by promoting a common understanding of the framework of radicalization.

### **3. Staircase to Terrorism Metaphor**

The staircase to terrorism metaphor likens the climb to terrorism as climb up a narrowing staircase. It is a micro-level view of radicalization from a psychological perspective. It has a bottom-up trajectory and considers state and socio-cultural permissive factors through motivational framing. Particular psychological processes characterize each floor of the staircase. The entire population begins on the ground floor, but some individuals decide to climb up to the next floor of the staircase (Moghaddam, 2005a).

On the ground floor, the main psychological issues are identity and fairness; people need to have a positive and distinct identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and to feel that they are being treated fairly (Schwartz et al., 2009). On the first floor, individuals seek avenues for social mobility (e.g., through education and job opportunities). Those

who feel dissatisfied and climb up to the second floor already experience ‘threatened identities’ and a sense of injustice, and now displace their aggression onto out-groups (e.g., America).

On the third floor, individuals shift morally, so that they come to believe that ‘the ends justify the means’; violence is justified to ‘please God.’ Individuals who reach the fourth floor adopt categorical thinking, ‘we are good, they are evil’, ‘we will go to heaven, they belong in hell’, and so forth. On the fifth floor, some individuals take the final step of sidestepping ‘inhibitory mechanisms’ that serve to prevent most people from killing other humans. Thus, the staircase metaphor envisages a step-wise progression, with individuals becoming increasingly radicalized and ‘locked into’ morality that justifies violence as they climb up to the final floor of the staircase (Moghaddam, 2005b).

The staircase metaphor is intended to provide a general framework within which to organize current psychological knowledge and to help direct future research and policy; it is not intended as a formal model to be tested against alternatives (Moghaddam, 2005a). The staircase metaphor contributes a view of socio-psychological dynamics at various points in the process of radicalization and examines the permissive factors that might prompt an individual to go further.

Micro-level theories and disciplinary foci add to the research the knowledge necessary to understand the individual dynamics, personal grievances and ideological factors involved in radicalization. The focus of much of the research on terrorism and radicalization has changed. The emphasis on the individual has diminished largely as researchers realize the importance of situational and contextual factors on the pathway through radicalism to terrorism. The following radicalization narrative describes what is known about the radicalization of an infamous radical propagandist and inspiring recruiter to terrorism.

#### **4. Radicalization Narrative: Anwar Al-Awlaki**

Anwar Al-Awlaki was a Yemeni-American born in New Mexico to immigrant parents. He was an American citizen, with the ability to use American culture and language to inspire other Americans to commit jihad. He was a senior leader and

propagandist for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) who was also said to have had connections to some of the 9/11 hijackers. Awlaki was killed in a U.S. drone attack while in Yemen on September 30, 2011. Awlaki was first noticed when he was an imam at the Dar Al Hijra mosque in Falls Church, Virginia. In his sermons and religious teachings, he would often allude to U.S. responsibility for the 9/11 attacks and U.S. “anti-Muslim” foreign policy (Berger, 2011). He did not initially appear to be an extremist in his beliefs. Even though his associations were suspect, when interviewed, his colleagues indicated that if he was radical at that time, they were fooled. The FBI interviewed him several times post-9/11 regarding his possible connection to the hijackers; however, his story seemed to change each time. It is either unknown or unsubstantiated as to whether he was a point of contact or in any way complicit in the events of 9/11.

Gradually, Awlaki’s tone in his sermons shifted and he became increasingly and more overtly extreme in his views and speech. After an FBI raid of several Islamic institutions in Virginia as a part of a terrorism-financing investigation, Awlaki delivered a sermon that demonstrated the extent of his radicalization. He stated, “So this is not now a war on terrorism. We need to all be clear about this. This is a war against Muslims and Islam. Not only is it happening worldwide but it’s happening right here in America, that is claiming to be fighting this war for the sake of freedom, while it’s infringing on the freedom of its own citizens just because they’re Muslims. For no other reason...” as cited in Berger (2011). During this time in his life, he often spoke of the discrimination against American Muslims and seemed to incite fear of discrimination, hate crimes and other civil rights violations amongst his followers.

Apparently, Awlaki’s radicalization continued to escalate as he soon left America, and traveled to London, Yemen and Saudi Arabia where he lectured at several conferences. It is reported that he briefly returned to the United States in October 2002 when he narrowly escaped arrest on an immigration charge and then fled the United States for good. He eventually surfaced in Yemen, reportedly sometime in 2004. His writings and lectures were discovered amongst many radicalized individuals with whom his path crossed. Awlaki was linked to or alleged to have inspired or contributed to the radicalization, either directly or indirectly through email, audio tapes and/or Internet

literature, Samir Khan,<sup>10</sup> Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab,<sup>11</sup> The Fort Dix Six,<sup>12</sup> Nidal Malik, Hasan,<sup>13</sup> and American-Somali Diaspora teens who went to Somalia to fight with Al-Shabaab.<sup>14</sup> By 2010, Anwar Awlaki was publicly praising (via audio, video and Internet) the actions of Abdulmutallab (the underwear bomber) and Nidal Hasan (the Fort Hood shooter) and mocking America's inability to defeat the "mujahedeen" (Berger, 2011).

From the information available regarding Anwar Al-Awlaki, it appears that his radicalization was based on religious ideology. Socio-political grievances and fear of discrimination and incarceration were often mentioned in his lectures and appeared to fuel the escalation of his extremist views. He skillfully used the Internet to craft and spread an inspirational radical narrative. He made himself accessible to his followers via Facebook and often exchanged email with those who reached out to him. As Anwar Al-Awlaki is now dead, the extent of his involvement in 9/11 or the radicalization of other homegrown violent extremists may never be known.

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<sup>10</sup> Samir Khan crafted *Inspire*, an Al Qaeda Internet propaganda magazine and was killed with Awlaki in September 2011 (Schone & Cole, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> A Nigerian citizen, inspired by Anwar Al-Awlaki, who attempted to detonate a bomb in his underwear on a flight bound for Detroit in December 2009 (Junio, 2010) .

<sup>12</sup> Six men were arrested in a plot against Fort Dix, a U.S. Army base in New Jersey. The plan included attacking and killing soldiers using assault rifles and grenades. In December 2008, a jury found five of the six guilty of conspiring to kill military personnel but cleared them of attempted murder. Four received life sentences without parole and the other received a 33-year sentence. A sixth man pled guilty to a lesser charge and was sentenced to 20 months in prison (Bjelopera & Randol, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> A mass shooting took place on November 5, 2009, at the Soldier Readiness Center at the U.S. Army's Fort Hood, located outside Killeen, TX. Thirteen people were killed and 43 others were wounded or injured. The accused perpetrator is Nidal Malik Hasan, a U.S. Army major serving as a psychiatrist. He is reported to have fired 100 rounds at soldiers processing through cubicles in the Center (Bjelopera & Randol, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> As of August 5, 2010, the Department of Justice (DOJ) had charged 19 individuals in an ongoing investigation of al-Shabaab-related recruitment of individuals in Minnesota—the Minneapolis, Minnesota area has the largest community of Somali-Americans in the United States. Reportedly, some of the indicted individuals began their terrorism-related activities in 2007, around the time al-Shabaab stepped up its insurgency against Somalia's transitional government and its Ethiopian supporters (Bjelopera & Randol, 2010).

## **B. ANALYSIS OF MID-LEVEL ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION PROCESS THEORIES**

Mid-level Islamic radicalization process theories have a psycho-sociological and ideological basis that emphasizes the sociological circumstances that contribute to the radicalization of individuals.

### **1. Individual and Group Mechanisms of Radicalization**

Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko base their research on radicalization and terrorism in the realm of social psychology. They posit a mid-level radicalization process theory that looks primarily at socio-cultural permissive factors as initiating and sustaining radicalization. They acknowledge that some distinguishing factors between individual and group radicalization exist. They examine the mechanisms of radicalization, or the path, or manner that allows a person to radicalize. This model attempts to explain how individuals and groups are radicalized based on personal or group-identity and grievances. It looks at the stimuli involved in the radicalization process from the group and the individual perspectives. Their model considers the socio-psychological circumstances that cultivate the identified mechanisms. They go further to review the symptoms that might provide clues that the various mechanisms are at work. Their model is premised on acknowledgement that either a top-down or a bottom-up trajectory may occur in cases of radicalization. In terms of motivational framing, this work relies heavily on the concepts of rational choice and individual and collective identity to surmise the mechanisms by which groups or individuals become involved with and sustain radical or terrorist beliefs and behaviors.

This work contributes to radicalization and terrorism research in that it acknowledges the gradual process of radicalization and coins the “*slippery slope*” as a critical phase for individuals deciding to join a radical group or moving from radical beliefs to action (mobilization). It provides insight into the group dynamics within the process of radicalization as a person moves from sympathizer, to supporter, and then to activist. Personal or political grievance or victimization is acknowledged as a mechanism by which an individual might come to radicalize. Persons who feel victimized by a group

or entity may be motivated to radicalize. It recognizes the importance of the strong emotions of love and fear and how those emotions might accelerate the radicalization process for individuals. Many of these elements were apparent in the radicalization narrative of Anwar Al-Awlaki (fear of victimization, incarceration and discrimination).

In this process theory, the power of self-persuasion and other mechanisms are considered, such as cognitive dissonance and dehumanization, which bore out in Stanley Milgram's studies of obedience and the Stanford Prison Experiment (Zimbardo, 2004). These concepts are important for understanding the situational factors or the contexts within which radicalization occurs or escalates. Focus on the conceptual or internal mechanisms and processes within the radicalization process is a limitation of this theory as it detracts from the necessary consideration of observable behavioral indicators upon which to influence to mitigate or interrupt the process.

Table 2. Mechanisms of Radicalization on the Pathway to Violence. (From: McCauley, Moskalenko, Alikhan, & National Press Club, 2011)

<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>
<b>Personal grievance</b>	Harm to self/loved ones	Anger/revenge
<b>Group grievance</b>	Perceived harm to group/cause	Outrage
<b>Love</b>	Radical friends/family	Concern/worry for loved one
<b>Fear</b>	Threat from gangs, militants, police, prison	Fear, anxiety, avoidance
<b>Risk and Status</b>	History of violence, arson, arrests	Easily bored, arrogant, into guns/bombs
<b>Slippery Slope</b>	Repeated exposure to violence	Gradual emotional detachment from violence
<b>Unfreezing</b>	Recent loss of job, family/friends; relocation	Loneliness, seeking new friends

Table 3. Pathways to violence: Mechanisms of political radicalization at individual, group, and mass-public levels. (From: McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008)

Level of radicalization	Mechanism
Individual	1. Personal victimization
	2. Political grievance
	3. Joining a radical group—the slippery slope
	4. Joining a radical group—the power of love
	5. Extremity shift in like-minded groups
Group	6. Extreme cohesion under isolation and threat
	7. Competition for the same base of support
	8. Competition with state power—condensation
	9. Within-group competition—fissioning
Mass	10. Jujitsu politics
	11. Hate
	12. Martyrdom

The group or mass radicalization processes outlined in the McCauley and Moskalenko work is most valuable in terms of observable phenomenon within the evolution of radicalized groups or terrorist cells. Their research examines how risk-taking behavior and status influence the evolution of radicalized groups. They further demonstrate how unfreezing<sup>15</sup> impacts the radicalization process (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011). Within-group competition and fissioning are important aspects of group radicalization that can help explain the group radicalization process also. The dynamics of group cohesion and fissioning<sup>16</sup> are important in the identification and understanding of terrorist cells and groups as they evolve. The following narrative exhibits the importance of understanding these concepts in terms of the evolution of the Al Qaeda affiliate, Al-Shabaab.

<sup>15</sup> Unfreezing occurs as fear drives individuals to seek new routines and connections that can provide safety. The absence of personal constraints gives way to new behaviors, which were previously uninhibited.

<sup>16</sup> Fissioning is the process by which internal group conflict and strife causes separations and “spin-offs” of the original group.

## **2. Al-Shabaab: Group Radicalization Narrative**

The economic or materialist perspective of the resource mobilization theory contends that collective action (radicalization towards terrorism in this case) is a result of economic factors and organization theory. It argues that grievances are not solely sufficient to explain the creation of this social/political movement and instead, “group discontent and collective movements can be shaped by those who control resources” (Moghaddam, 2006). At a time in Somalia’s history when militias and warlords intercepted and plundered resources during famine and drought, the resource mobilization theory was clearly demonstrated. Intercepts of U.S. aid by militias and warlords allowed them control over those crucial resources and control of the people in need of these resources. Out of this chaotic movement grew Al-Shabaab. Examining the rise of Al-Shabaab as an evolving collective identity can facilitate a greater understanding of movements and group or mass radicalization. The work of McCauley and Moskaleiko on the mechanisms of group radicalization contributes greatly to this understanding.

When viewing the group radicalization<sup>17</sup> of Al-Shabaab, many socio-psychological principles at work can be seen. Group radicalization principles are more obviously at work than individual radicalization principles in the case of Al-Shabaab. This group of youth, known as the Al-Shabaab, is a Somali insurgency movement that arose from grievances of civil unrest, internal group strife, lack of basic resources and governance. Figure 1 illustrates a pyramid model of radicalization, which may be quite applicable in this narrative. McCauley and Moskaleiko describe the group radicalization process similarly in terms of considering the base of the pyramid to be composed of the masses impacted and/or sympathizing with a cause, grievance, or whatever the terrorists will eventually fight for; in this case, the grievances were cruel despots, warlords and lack of basic resources. From the base to the apex, fewer will rise to the level at the apex, which is action (or terrorism) for the cause, and the beliefs, commitment and feelings

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<sup>17</sup> Functionally, political radicalization is increased preparation for and commitment to intergroup conflict. Descriptively, radicalization means change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the in-group (McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008).



intensify as the group moves up the gradient of the pyramid. The radicalization as the gradient of the pyramid distinguishes terrorists from their base of sympathizers (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

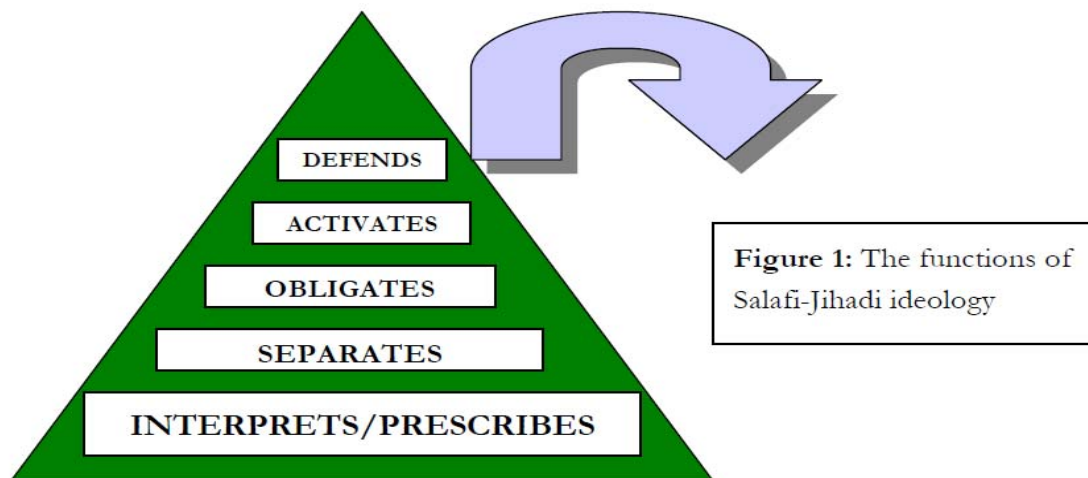


Figure 1. The Functions of Salafi-Jihadi Ideology. (From: Cozzens, 2006)

The evolution of the Shabaab went from participants at the base of the radicalization pyramid and then to a militant group assisting an anti-government unit at the apex of the pyramid. They later transformed, through group competition and fissioning, into the military arm of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Now attached to the governing unit of that time, Al-Shabaab became a part of the government that controlled the resources. Eventually, within-group competition, fissioning<sup>18</sup> again occurred within the ICU, which caused a split and the eventual formation of Al-Shabaab the terrorist group (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). When smaller, more cohesive groups within a movement are formed, the potential for radicalization and terrorism increases as the group advances on the gradient of the pyramid model of group radicalization. The internal group strife and fissioning escalates the radicalization process of the group.

<sup>18</sup> The within-group competition for status represented in social comparison theory can produce intense conflict (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008) and cause fissioning of the group as demonstrated by the splintering of Al-Shabaab from the ICU.

Recall that a connection or linkage to a wider terrorist network is an indicator of mobilization or an elevated level of radicalization (Vidino, 2011); and note that Al-Shabaab has affiliated with Al Qaeda. Al-Shabaab has become a staple in the Somali conflict and acquired international attention due to its affiliation with al Qaeda, its terrorist acts against other Somalis to impose a harsh sharia law, and its bombings in Uganda. Those terrorist acts, and the media attention that resulted, demonstrate rational choice theory at work. As rational actors, this small group has perpetrated violent acts that generated widespread media attention and earned consideration as to whether Al-Shabaab is a transnational threat. Al-Shabaab has been adaptive and able to substantively involve itself in the ongoing conflicts within Somalia. It is the only Somali militia to advance to identification as a significant insurgency movement and then to be identified as a terrorist group by the United States.<sup>19</sup>

Globalization in terms of modernization of communications via the worldwide web has enabled Al-Shabaab a greater reach and global connections. The extent to which Al-Shabaab has ties to al Qaeda is not clearly articulated; however, its messages are conveyed on al Qaeda affiliated websites and there is speculation that some members have attended training camps for al Qaeda in Afghanistan, or received training from al Qaeda leaders visiting Somalia. This supposition raises concerns that it will offer al Qaeda a safe haven or a toehold in Somalia as a base from which to launch future missions. That it is affiliated, if only loosely, with al Qaeda and that it grew out of the ICU and after a schism within the ICU, it splintered and became a separate insurgency movement against Ethiopia and the TFG (Somaiya, 2010), seems to have contributed to Al-Shabaab's identification as a legitimate terrorist group.

Al-Shabaab's evolution suggests in-fighting or minimally divergent ideas as to tactics or ideology. The current leadership is unknown but it is purported to have new leadership as often as the schisms and spin-offs occur, which appears indicative of the presence of yet another mass radicalization dynamic—jijitsu politics. This dynamic of

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<sup>19</sup> Due to their terrorist tactics and affiliation with al Qaeda, Al-Shabaab was branded a terrorist group by the United States in 2008 (Hassan & Muhumed, 2010).

radicalization can be understood as a generalization and idealization of the group norms indicated by increased group cohesion, increased respect for group leaders, and increased sanctions for in-group deviates (McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008).

Al-Shabaab's acts of terrorism in Uganda where it was responsible for a spate of bombings during the World Cup soccer final, which killed 76 people (Hassan & Muhumed, 2010), were seemingly its first on foreign soil. Al-Shabaab's stated claim is to overthrow the government of Somalia and impose strict sharia law. Additional mass radicalization dynamics to consider are the group's ability to dehumanize those in the out-group who disagree with its ideology and tactics. The dehumanization dynamic allows the group to impose harsh sharia law principles, and inflict brutal punishment against fellow Somalis who dare to behave contrary to Al-Shabaab's expectations. Dehumanization and moral disengagement dynamics (Zimbardo, 2007) also allow Al-Shabaab to inflict terrorist violence both within and outside of Somalia. Heretofore, the group's targeting was consistent with that of an insurgency movement—within the bounds of Somalia. However, the Ugandan bombings present a new twist—attacks outside Somalia. The Ugandan bombings apparently were not the first foray beyond Somalia's borders as evidence exists of recruitment and fundraising activities amongst Diaspora Somalis in the United States and Canada (Somaiya, 2010).

Shirwa Ahmed, a Somali-American from Minneapolis, earned the dubious distinction of being the first known U.S. citizen to become a suicide bomber. In 2009, he blew himself up, killing 30 other people in a suicide truck bombing outside Mogadishu, Somalia. "It appears he was radicalized in his hometown in Minnesota," according to the FBI. The FBI is still looking into the disappearance of about 20 young Somali-American men who went missing from Minnesota in 2007, believed now to be in Somalia fighting for Al-Shabaab. According to CIA analysts, foreigners from the Somali Diaspora who join Al-Shabaab are not going to join terrorist cells but to be foot soldiers in the Somalia civil-military conflict (Kingsbury, 2009).

Fourteen U.S. citizens have been charged with providing support for Al-Shabaab; most of them are from Minnesota, California, and Alabama, two of which were women from Rochester, Minnesota accused of raising money for Al-Shabaab (Yost, 2010). Al-

Shabaab has also, according to Jon Lee Anderson in *The New Yorker*, “declared war on the U. N. and on Western non-governmental organizations.” It considers Ethiopia, the 2006 invader, and Uganda and Burundi, which sent in troops as part of the African Union force, as enemies (Somaiya, 2010). The recruitment outside of Somalia seems a rational choice indicating a desire to expand, promote its cause, and better achieve its objectives. The grievances being touted are Western interference in a Muslim state and the invasion of Ethiopia, Uganda, and Burundi (with U.S. backing) into Somalia.

Web-based recruitment on Al Qaeda websites is a change in strategy for Al-Shabaab. Recruitment of Diaspora Somalis (perhaps youth seeking personal identity) from the United States and Canada is a strategic change that has caused analysts to ponder whether Al-Shabaab is a threat from within the United States. In terms of social identity theory, this idea is demonstrative of the increased negative perception of the out-group (the West) and buy-in to the extremist ideology that ‘the West is at war with Islam’ as this is yet another Islamic country in which the West has a presence. What concerns officials more than the recruitment of Somali-Americans, is the possibility of returning veterans of the conflict. “Radicalized individuals, trained in terrorist tactics and in possession of American passports, can pose a threat,” Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine warned (Kingsbury, 2009). The concerns about Al-Shabaab have graduated from not only the humanitarian concerns arising out of the killing of its own people, brutally amputating limbs and stoning citizens to death under harshly administered sharia law to larger, more global concerns.

### **3. Religiously Based Pathways and Theories of Salafi-Jihadi Radicalization**

Jeffrey Cozzens identified the phases of Salafi-Jihadi radicalization as per Figure 1. The objective of the Cozzens study was to explain the functions of militant Salafi ideology within the process of violent Islamic radicalization. While acknowledging that religious ideology is not the sole motivating factor in the violent Islamic radicalization process as it has presented in U.S. cases, this study acknowledges that religious ideology does matter in some cases and cannot be overlooked at times. The Fort Hood shootings

case is an example. It is important to realize that religious ideology is not always the primary, or the only motivating factor in radicalization. This study and other theories acknowledge the importance of social dynamics within the radicalization process but focus only on the religious dynamics as motivators and limits an overall understanding of the violent Islamic radicalization process.

The Silber and Bhatt model of the process of radicalization, also known as the religious conveyor belt theory (Silber & Bhatt, 2007), which is discussed later in this research, aligns with the religiously based Salafi-Jihadi model, to a great extent. Since the Silber and Bhatt process model is based primarily on religious behaviors, the law enforcement tactics that evolved from heeding that model caused allegations of religious profiling. Therein lays the basis for caution when basing a radicalization process model, from which policies and practices will be developed, solely on religion or religious practices.

Again, understanding the basic suppositions of the religious ideology as part of the dynamics of the radicalization process can facilitate the association of the dynamics with observable behaviors. The ability to understand and discern cases of, and behaviors that occur within the Islamic radicalization process, is important for the development of counter-radicalization measures. By modeling the Salafi-Jihadist ideological implications within the radicalization process, Cozzens hoped to “highlight strategic ‘openings’ where Salafi-Jihadi ideology might be vulnerable and potentially exploited by the international community” (Cozzens, 2006).

The perspective of this process theory is, therefore, religion. It presents a bottom-up view of the radicalization process with religion as the basis of its motivational framing. Cozzens describes the *interpreting and prescribing* stage in Figure 1 as a spiritual quest to interpret the Quran, the religious scripts of the Islamic faith. During this stage, the individual is said to engage in detailing the ills of society and prescribes the protection of Islam as the solution to those ills. This stage could be manifested in the verbal behavior of the subject, as noted with Nidal Hasan in the Fort Hood case. The separation phase of the model is described as when the ideological separation of Islamists from the infidels or unbelievers is realized (in-group/out-group). An observable behavior

might be physical isolation or separation from social groups and identification with a smaller group of like-minded individuals or no peer group at all in the lone wolf scenario. The next phase obligates jihad as a righteous struggle for good Muslims and capabilities gathering can be observed. The activation and defense of Islam stages are operational planning and execution of terrorist acts for the good of the whole of Islam. Lorenzo Vidino posits that in Europe the presence of homegrown jihadist networks evolves from “an amateurish cluster of friends to a full-fledged terrorist cell” when the presence of linkage between the homegrown network and al Qaeda and affiliated movements exists (Vidino, 2011).

The Salafi-Jihadi theory model is limited because it does not account for the divergent social dynamics involved in the process of radicalization; it is not a comprehensive radicalization process model. However, it does highlight the religious motivations that may occur within the radicalization process and attempts to identify opportunities for intervention.

Some of the behaviors in the stages in Figure 1 are also identified in a work by Michael Taarnby, as cited by Cozzens (2006), whose analysis of the Hamburg cell’s staging of the 9/11 attacks, proposed stages of radicalization as follows.

- Individual alienation
- Spiritual quest<sup>20</sup>
- Process of radicalization
- Meeting and associating with like-minded people [socialization]
- Gradual seclusion and cell formation
- Acceptance of violence
- Connection with a gatekeeper [a militant connected to a terrorist network]<sup>21</sup>
- Going operational

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<sup>20</sup> It is necessary to be cautious as this behavior is over generalized and can be misleading. Unwarranted surveillance of Muslim persons based solely on religious habits may prove counterproductive to counter-radicalization efforts as it could lead to the alienation of allies within the Muslim community.

<sup>21</sup> In some instances, and particularly in lone wolf scenarios or those of homegrown violent extremists, the interaction of a gatekeeper has been absent.

When considering the defends/operational stage of the process model in Figure 1, it is necessary to be mindful of what has been learned from studies of homegrown violent extremists—HVEs within the United States (Jenkins, 2010); this population has diverse end games . Martyrdom is seldom the endgame with HVEs in the United States and a great many of HVEs are recent converts to Islam to whom the spiritual quest was not evident, which was the case with Faisal Shahzad, the would-be Times Square bomber. Therefore, to rely solely on patterns of religiosity as indicative of radicalization is not a balanced and prudent course of action.

#### **4. Silber and Bhatt—Radicalization in the West**

Two senior intelligence analysts in the New York City Police Department, Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt, prepared a report, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, in 2007. This report was based on a comparative case analysis of 10 homegrown terrorist plots planned and/or enacted by individuals seeking to attack their country of residence. From that analysis, a radicalization process model comprised of four stages; pre-radicalization, self-indoctrination, indoctrination and jihadization, was identified as in Figures 2 and 3. Through these steps outlined by Silber and Bhatt, an individual is first exposed to the extremist ideology, identifies with the ideology via association with like-minded individuals and exposure to like-minded views, literature or other media, and finally, is indoctrinated by persons who validate or sanction the individual's actions and beliefs (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). The model is religiously based and motivationally framed on the ideological premises of the Salafi Islamic religious sect, and focuses on socio-cultural permissive factors as those that most contribute to the process. This study attempted to establish an HVE profile and its model soon became widely understood and accepted as the model for understanding and informing training and strategies for law enforcement officials in dealing with cases of terrorism.

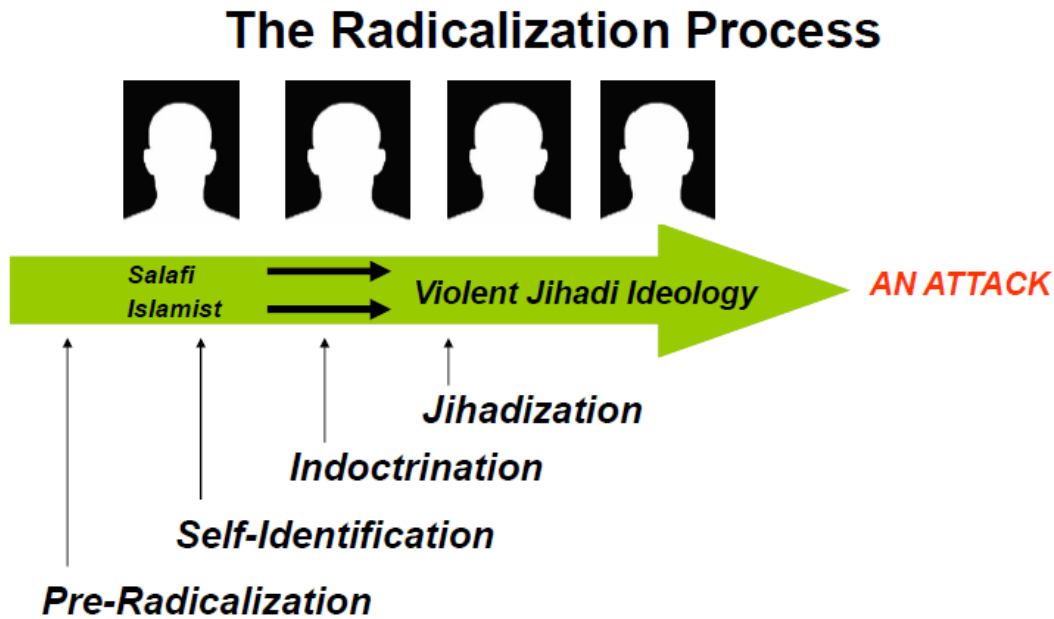


Figure 2. The Radicalization Process. (From: Silber & Bhatt, 2007)

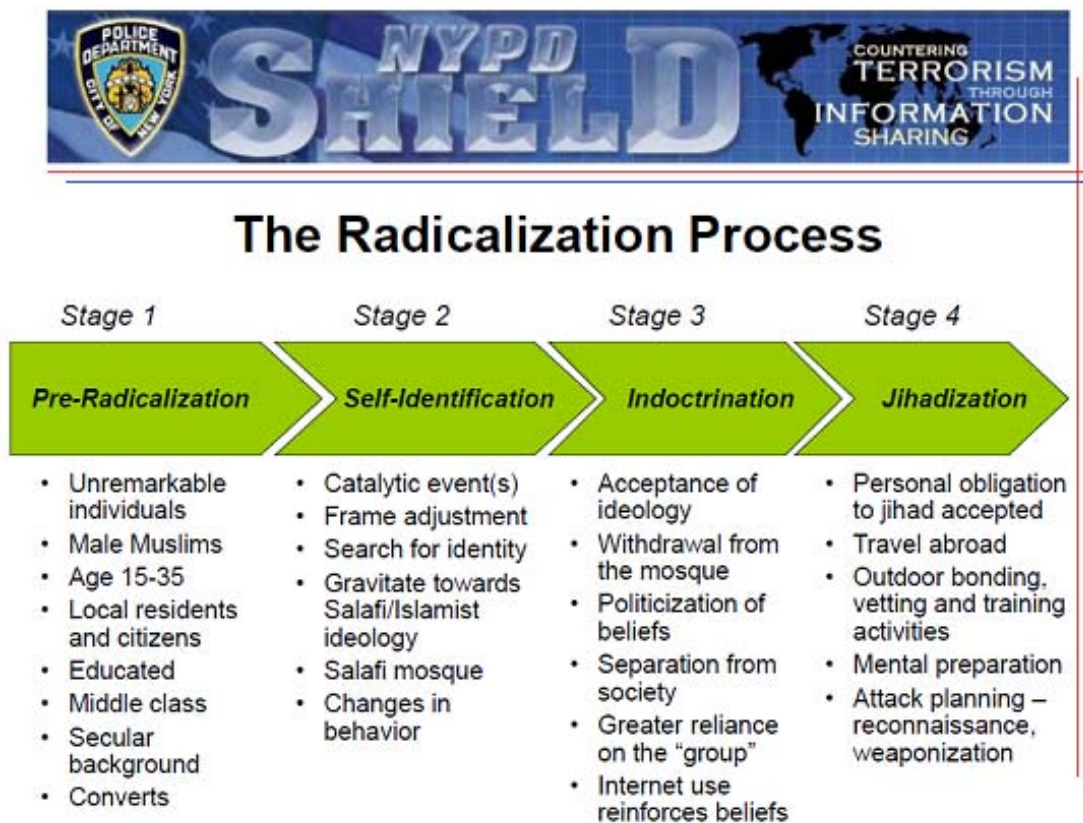


Figure 3. The Stages in the Process of Radicalization per Silber & Bhatt (From: Silber, 2009)



This process model contributed to future research and study by serving as a model against which cases of radicalization could be tested, and new models developed. It served as the initiator of the quest for observable behavioral patterns upon which law enforcement could act. Unfortunately, its focus on religious behaviors and its framing of mosques, cafes, cab driver hangouts, flophouses, prisons, student associations, non-governmental organizations, hookah bars, butcher shops and book stores as “radicalization incubators” earned it the moniker of the ‘religious conveyor belt’ theory, reputed to promote religious profiling. Surveillance of the aforementioned venues caused concerns and eventual rifts between the FBI and Muslims.

The FBI is reported to utilize a model comparable to the Silber and Bhatt model; one in which a four stage process is reflected in the chart reproduced as Figure 4.

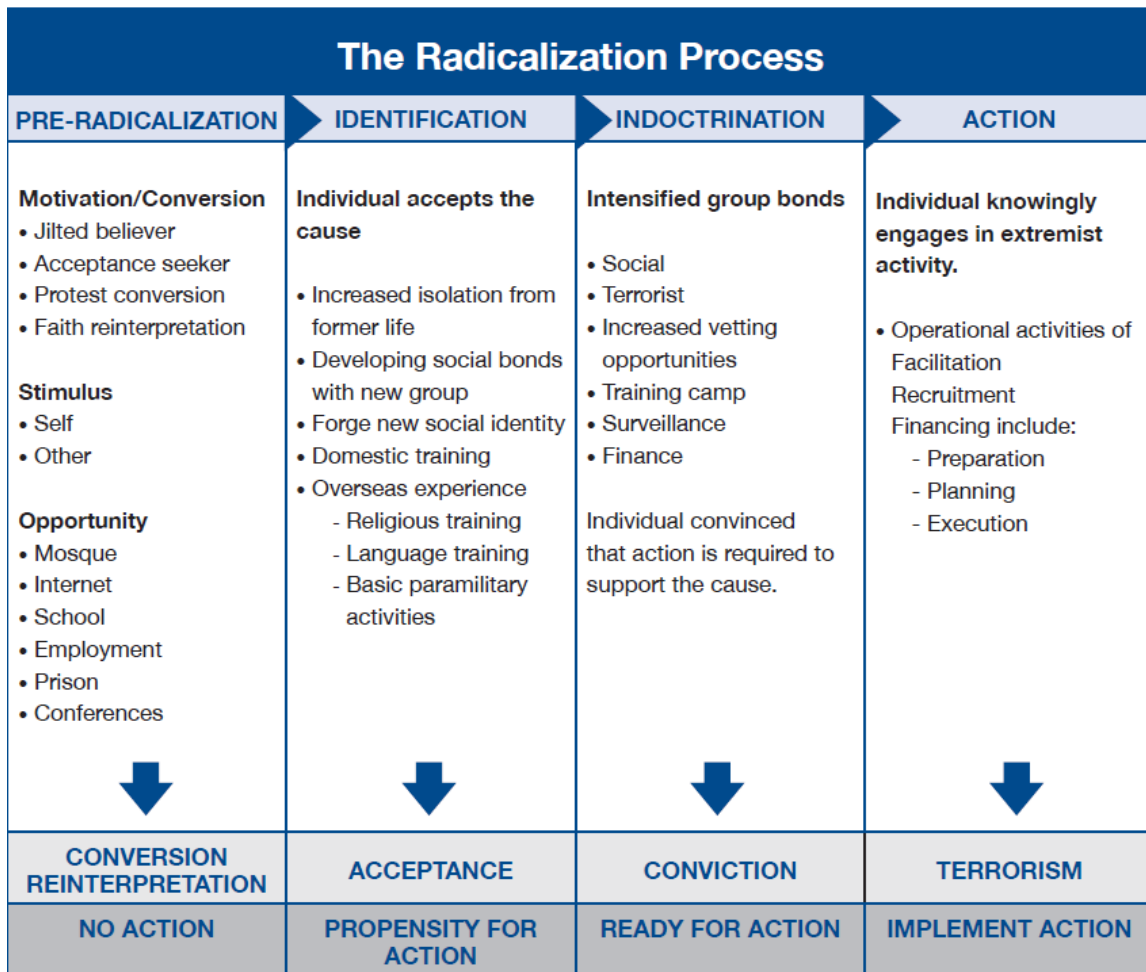


Figure 4. A Radicalization Process Model Used by the FBI. (From: Patel, 2011)

The reported FBI theory has similar characteristics at each stage closely aligned with Silber and Bhatt’s “religious conveyor belt” radicalization process model.

The FBI has apparently sought and utilized several trainers and training modules of radicalization. Recently, the FBI has come under fire by the ACLU for alleged profiling of Muslims and other minorities, which targeted them for investigation. The FBI disputed the allegations as the ACLU unveiled a new project called “Mapping the FBI,” which used internal FBI documents to portray the FBI as linking criminal behavior to racial and ethnic groups and using census data to ‘map’ those communities (Markon, 2011). Recent reports of FBI training allege that the FBI is teaching counterterrorism agents to view “main stream” Muslim Americans as terrorist sympathizers (Ackerman,

2011a) and to view the Islamic religion as inherently violent. In response to reports of such training, it is reported that Senator Joe Lieberman called on the president's assistant on homeland security for "meaningful standards" on law enforcement counterterrorism training (Ackerman, 2011b). This action further emphasizes the need for a common model from which to develop understanding, training, and policy with regard to the radicalization process throughout the homeland security enterprise.

The media reports on the trials and challenges of FBI training regarding radicalization indicate efforts by the bureau to develop an understanding upon which to train agents as to the radicalization process and indicators that can be relied upon for interdiction and purposes of countering radicalization and terrorism. The challenges presented are unique to American culture as U.S. domestic counterterrorism efforts must be carefully balanced with a commitment to, and valuing of, civil rights and liberties. This scenario emphasizes the need for a model of radicalization that informs training, which does not promote profiling based on religion or ethnicity, but encourages focus on behaviors of individuals who may be undergoing the radicalization process or planning acts of terrorism. The answer to the FBI's radicalization process training quandary may not be far away. A closer look at the framework developed by the NCTC, part of the intelligence arm of the homeland security enterprise, may provide much needed answers and a basis for better understanding and training the radicalization process framework.

## **5. National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)—A Dynamics Framework**

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (9/11 Commission) made a series of recommendations in its 2004 report. Some of the recommendations provided for the restructuring of the U. S. intelligence community. Lack of information sharing across the agencies responsible for homeland security was cited as an obstacle for effective and efficient security of the homeland (Kean et al., 2004). The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004 created the position of the director of national intelligence (DNI), who is to have access to all intelligence and is responsible for ensuring it is disseminated as needed across the

intelligence community. Among other entities also created by IRTPA is the NCTC. The DNI is responsible for the NCTC, which produces analysis on all terrorism and counterterrorism issues, except those purely domestic. The director of the NCTC is the mission manager for terrorism intelligence and reports directly to the president on the planning and progress of joint counterterrorism operations. The NCTC has no direct law enforcement function. The NCTC is part of the U.S. Intelligence community (Lowenthal, 2009). It seems practical that NCTC intelligence analysis would at least in part inform U.S. counterterrorism efforts and radicalization as an emergent threat in the homeland.

The NCTC radicalization and mobilization dynamics framework (reproduced and inserted below as Figure 5) approaches radicalization from a multi-disciplinary perspective. It considers personal psychological perspectives, sociopolitical factors, group dynamics, as well as push and pull factors (referenced as catalysts and inhibitors). This framework acknowledges that not all extremists graduate to acts of terrorism and considers the key triggers involved that factor into mobilization and action. The framework, therefore, separates radicalization, mobilization and action phases as somewhat distinct, yet interconnected. The NCTC webpage captions the diagram as follows, “this framework represents how individuals radicalize, mobilize, and in some cases, commit violence and describes radicalization as a dynamic and multi-layered process involving several factors that interact with one another to influence an individual. There is no single factor that explains radicalization and mobilization” (The National Counterterrorism Center, 2011).

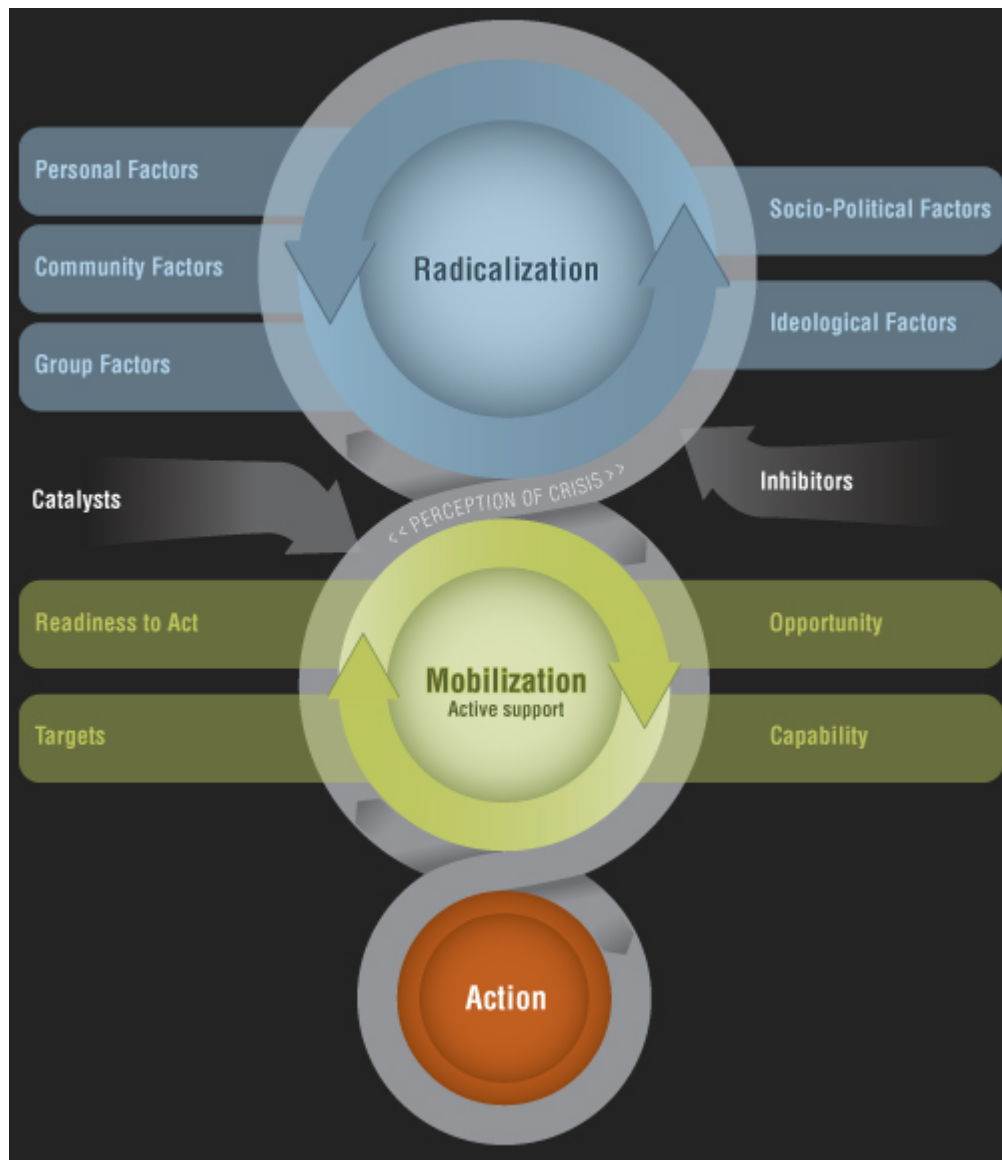


Figure 5. The National Counterterrorism Center Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework. (From: The National Counterterrorism Center, 2011)

The NCTC framework is based on the analysis of cases of terrorism and is forward thinking in that it establishes the foundation necessary for connecting distinct and observable behaviors to the factors highlighted in the framework. This step is critical for the goal of developing sets of behaviors upon which policy makers and law enforcement might act to develop effective counterterrorism policies and tactics. The NCTC framework is a comprehensive model that could be effectively utilized to inform

training, policy and law enforcement tactics. Use of this framework as a basis for policy could help law enforcement avoid claims of profiling as it does not heavily or solely rely on religious practices as indicators of radicalization. Ideology, collective identity and rational actor framing are factors that could interact in cycles within this radicalization process framework. The cyclical visual model avoids the notion of prescriptive steps toward mobilization and accounts for a variety of combinations of factors that might affect a given case of radicalization. A logical next step, based on the premises of the recommendations of the 9/11 commission report and the prevailing research, would be that the NCTC intelligence-based radicalization and mobilization dynamics framework would inform policies and actions for entities within the homeland security enterprise.

By making distinct, the radicalization, mobilization and action cycles of the radicalization process, it is recognized that not all individuals who possess extremist ideology go on to commit violent acts. Realizing the influence of catalysts and inhibitors, an individual may languish in the radicalization cycle and without the presence of needed catalysts or with the influence of certain inhibitors, never progress to the mobilization cycle. What is important about this concept is the recognition of the dynamics of multiple factors. This framework makes it possible to consider multiple combinations of factors as opposed to looking at a prescriptive series of steps. It is the type of framework most useful for reviewing and analyzing some of the most complex HVE cases in the United States; take, for instance, the radicalization narrative of Samir Khan, which follows.

## **6. Radicalization Narrative: Samir Khan Radicalization**

Samir Khan, 25, was a young American Muslim said to have been the editor of Al Qaeda's English language on-line magazine, *Inspire*. He was killed on September 30, 2011 in the same drone strike that killed Anwar Al-Awlaki (Schone & Cole, 2011). Khan was born in Saudi Arabia and came to the United States with his parents when he was seven years old and lived in Queens, New York. He appeared happy and well integrated, wearing baggy pants, listening to rap music and speaking the vernacular of most American youth. The family later relocated to North Carolina, where Khan began on the path of radicalization as a teenager after attending a summer camp sponsored by

fundamentalist Muslims. He connected with the religion of his heritage country and began espousing its grievances. Khan had a penchant for blogging and sometime after his return from summer camp, he connected with a radical fundamentalist Muslim group and the tenor of his blog posts began to change. From the available open source information, it is unclear as to whether the radicalization began because of recruitment or self-radicalization based on religious ideology and internet exposure.

Khan's initially conservative blogs became increasingly radical (celebrating the writings of Omar Abdel Rahman, Ayman Al Zawahiri, and Anwar Awlaki) over time and soon escalated to the point of violating his Internet service provider's agreement, which prohibited hate speech. Samir Khan's blog user name was "inshallahshaheed"—"God willing, a martyr." This name is indicative of the depth of his commitment to the extremist ideology at that particular time. During this time, Khan's parents attempted to intervene by disconnecting the Internet service in their home, where Khan blogged from the basement. In 2009, he began publishing an online magazine called *Jihad Recollections*. This publication was distributed through a wide variety of English-language jihadist forums and websites. His final publication of *Jihad Recollections* was published in September 2009. In October 2009, he moved to Yemen where he met Anwar Al-Awlaki (Berger, 2011). The blogging and frequenting of jihadist websites appears indicative of "Leaderless Jihad" as posited by Marc Sageman; however, the involvement of a radical spiritual advisor (Awlaki in this case) was a factor that catalyzed Khan's radicalization.

In July 2010, AQAP released the first edition of *Inspire* and media reports confirmed it was the work of Samir Khan. He edited seven issues of *Inspire* prior to his death, which included scripts of Awlaki sermons and articles, such as "How to Build a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom." He died an American Al Qaeda recruiter who used his American vernacular and the Internet to inspire would-be jihadists. He was said to be involved with, or have access to, operational activities of AQAP at the time of his death. His path of radicalization led to the eventual support and recruitment or inspiration of

potential jihadists and took approximately seven years. His travel to a foreign country to engage in jihadist activities or training is indicative of a common facet of the mobilization or operational stages of studies analyzed in this paper.

Relative to the Clutterbuck and Warnes study, the following indicators of radicalization could be argued in this case; after attending a religious camp, Khan began frequenting and collecting violent jihadi material, he connected with fundamentalist groups (attended external study circles and re-engaged with “heritage religion”), and associated with a radical preacher/imam (Awlaki). Further, considering the Musa and Bendett study, Khan separated from the larger Muslim community and his family and radicalized largely via the Internet, in addition to being involved with or indoctrinated, either overseas or in the United States; and traveling or training overseas.

It is reported that Khan’s family had distanced themselves from him, as he became more radical. On behalf of his family, Jibril Hough, a spokesman for the Islamic Center of Charlotte North Carolina, reports that he had staged two separate interventions to try to steer Samir Khan away from the radical path he was on prior to his move to Yemen. While the methods used in the attempted interventions were not mentioned, it appears that neither discussions, family pleas, diminished family relations, nor the disconnection of Internet service served as effective interventions to inhibit Khan’s level of radicalization at those times. Thus, lending credence to the necessity of this and additional studies on the radicalization process and opportunities within that process susceptible to the influence of counter measures, policy, or other intervention or preventive methods.

## **7. Samuel Musa and Samuel Bendett—Islamic Radicalization in the United States: New Trends and a Proposed Methodology for Disruption**

A review of the recent cases of terrorism in the United States conducted by Samuel Musa and Samuel Bendett, in concurrence with the NCTC framework, posits that radicalization trending is changing as illustrated in Figure 6. Of Islam-inspired terrorist activity within the United States, plots conducted by HVEs are on the up-tick. This study



conjectures radicalization of HVEs as a seemingly less protracted process that is not apparent, which makes it very difficult to detect. Musa and Bendett reviewed Islam-inspired terrorist activity since 9/11, including the 9/11 perpetrators, the Lackawanna Six,<sup>22</sup> Faisal Shahzad,<sup>23</sup> and the case of Colleen LaRose,<sup>24</sup> and concurred that no terrorist profile exists from which to base counter-radicalization measures. This belief furthers the position that operating based on a demographic profile of terrorists requires observation of a very large population from which to hone into the small number of persons who may radicalize or become involved in terrorism. From previously presented studies on civil rights and liberties issues, when an entire population is treated as suspect to narrow down to a small number of perpetrators, this tactic serves as fodder for the ideology of the propagandists who say that “the West is at war with Islam” and incites as opposed to counters radicalization.

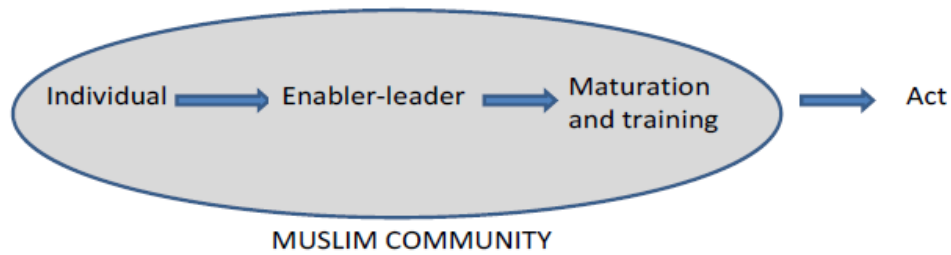
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<sup>22</sup> The Lackawanna Six are Yemeni-Americans of whom five were born in the United States, and one was a naturalized U.S. citizen who were arrested for training at an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan.

<sup>23</sup> Faisal Shahzad is a naturalized U.S. citizen from Pakistan, who unsuccessfully attempted to detonate a vehicle borne IED in Times Square.

<sup>24</sup> Colleen LaRose, who also called herself “Jihad Jane,” is a native U.S. citizen and a convert to Islam arrested for plotting to kill a Swedish artist whose drawing of Muhammad enraged Muslims.

Pre-2009 general radicalization model involved individuals dedicated to their cause who lived, trained and received indoctrination, advice and support from within the Muslim community's radicalized elements.



Present and future radicalization model takes the Muslim community and access to religious message into consideration, but does not require it – knowledge and radical Islamic message can be obtained from the Internet by an individual who was assimilated into larger American society.

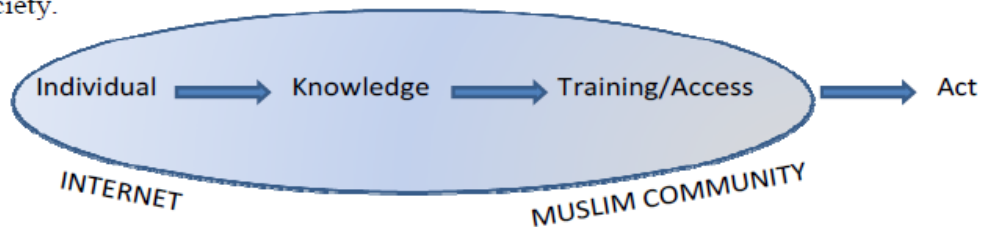


Figure 6. Musa and Bendett Model of the Changing Nature of Islamic Radicalization in the United States. (From: Musa & Bendett, 2010)

Musa and Bendett's model is a mid-level radicalization process model that acknowledges the complexity of the socio-psychological dynamics of the gradual radicalization process. These researchers reviewed bottom-up trajectory of self-indoctrination into radicalization as well as top-down recruitment or inspiration as relevant when reviewing cases of HVEs, such as Colleen LaRose and Faizal Shahzad. This study mapped out common elements in the HVE terrorism cases reviewed. They concluded that the perpetrators were as follows.

- Dissatisfied with their lives
- Indoctrinated, either overseas or in the United States
- Trained, either overseas or locally
- Separated from the larger Muslim community and their families, which had no part in their path towards radicalization
- Radicalized largely via the Internet, especially in the most recent cases (Musa & Bendett, 2010)



Figure 7. Musa and Bendett Model for Disrupting Radicalization Patterns.

The Musa and Bendett study drew on a previous study conducted in May 2008 by the Center for Technology and National Security Policy (Thachuk, Bowman, & Richardson, 2008) on homegrown violent extremists. That study identified “a cluster of conditions that must be present for an individual to become radicalized,” shown in Figure 7. The research proposed that “the [radicalization] effect is cumulative and iterative; removing one or more of these conditions may lower the radicalization level below the threshold for violence” (Musa & Bendett, 2010), which is a critical consideration for radicalization process models that will inform training and policy. It also comports with the NCTC radicalization and mobilization dynamics framework. The point of identifying radicalization factors, motivations, and phases is to discern behaviors or indicators that can be removed, interrupted, or otherwise, influenced by policy and/or counter-radicalization measures. The proposition that radicalization is both cumulative and iterative is supported by many other studies reviewed in this paper. The idea that it is

necessary to review combinations of factors or behaviors as opposed to focusing on prescribed successive steps is valuable for improved understanding of this phenomenon.

An additional contribution to the study of causes and pathways to radicalization and the potential for interdiction is in the work of Dr. Peter Neumann of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London. In a recent report, *Preventing Violent Radicalization in America*, Neumann presents a social science or socio-psychological approach considered a mid-level view of the issue of radicalization. Neumann views radicalization as a complex and gradual process, indicating the nearly eight-year path of radicalization traveled by Samir Khan. This theory examines the process of radicalization through motivational framing and supposes a blended top-down and bottom-up trajectory. Elements of socio-economic exclusion, conflicted identities, injustice and, oppression are seen as probable facets of grievance as a driver of radicalization (Neumann, 2011). Neumann points to the three primary drivers of radicalization as grievance, adoption of an extremist narrative or ideology, and social and group dynamics. He makes the case that radicalization need not always be viewed as a law enforcement issue but begs a multi-disciplinary exploration of radicalization as also a social issue, not immune to the influence of social policy. By viewing radicalization from a multi-disciplinary perspective, it is essential to acknowledge the necessity of a multi-disciplinary approach for countering radicalization in the United States. This approach again would support the intelligence-based radicalization and mobilization dynamics framework crafted by the NCTC as key to the multi-disciplinary approach to countering radicalization in the United States.

This perspective lends credence to the blended, multi-faceted view of radicalization and highlights the divergent paths to radicalization and violence. The Internet is being greatly focused on as a tool used in the radicalization process. Neumann emphasizes the Internet as part of the social dynamic of the interaction within a small group of friends or a charismatic leader as being pivotal in the process of radicalization as well. The focus from this perspective is on the transformation of beliefs. Lessons learned from the United Kingdom indicate that the radical narrative must be contested. The supposition is that “all kinds of action—moderate, angry, very angry, and even violent—

is the product of reasoning (Kirby, 2007); begging a cognitive interventional approach to countering extremism. While this approach may seem somewhat simplistic by boiling the process of radicalization down to three main drivers, it acknowledges the complexity of the process and builds on some of the concepts heralded by Marc Sageman in his works regarding understanding terror networks (Sageman, 2008). Sageman posited that no generally agreed upon “terrorist profile”; or common income, education and radicalization factors exist, but similar behaviors or behavioral patterns that can be associated with radicalization do.

## **8. Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman**

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Laura Grossman conducted an empirical examination of the radicalization process wherein they analyzed changes in behavioral characteristics of 117 Islamic homegrown terrorists in the United States and United Kingdom who perpetrated or attempted to perpetrate, or support terrorism through October 2008 (Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009). This study presented several important conclusions. One important conclusion is that homegrown terrorists’ understanding of their religion was a relatively significant factor in their radicalization and implores more study. They concur that no single terrorist profile exists. The study underscored the importance of international connections to mobilization of HVEs. They concluded that prisons do not appear to be as important a factor in radicalization as some experts previously believed. This study additionally emphasizes the necessity of engagement with the Muslim community as an important component for the development of effective counter radicalization measures.

Their study added six behaviors, or behavioral changes to the research that can be identified in persons transitioning through the process of radicalization to violent extremism or terrorism. The behavioral changes noted by Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman include the following.

- Adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam
- Coming to trust only a select and ideologically rigid group of religious authorities

- Viewing the West and Islam as irreconcilably opposed
- Manifesting a low tolerance for perceived religious deviance
- Attempting to impose religious beliefs on others
- Expressing radical political views

This behavioral analysis is important to the research because, if identifiable behavioral characteristics in addition to situational circumstances in which radicalization might occur are known, it might additionally be possible to identify tipping points at which intervention might be most effective.

While some of the behavioral characteristics outlined are only observable in terms of the verbal behavior of the subjects, friends and family or other close associates may only be privy to those observations. Relationships between the Muslim communities and authorities might allow the positive exploitation of such observations, to which authorities might not otherwise have access. Some of the behavioral patterns discussed concur with those identified by Marc Sageman, who describes behavioral patterns in his book, *Leaderless Jihad* (Sageman, 2008), as radical messaging via the Internet, and socialization with persons associated with the proliferation of the radical narrative, as well as travel to foreign countries where suspected Al Qaeda training camps may exist as some behavioral indicators that radicalization has occurred or is escalating.

Another study that contributes to the bank of behavioral cues of radicalization and the pathway toward acts of terrorism is a report by the European branch of the RAND Corporation, *Exploring Patterns of Behaviour in Violent Jihadist Terrorists: An Analysis of Six Significant Terrorist Conspiracies in the UK*, conducted by Lindsay Clutterbuck and Richard Warnes. Using “truth tables” methodology, six terrorist groups/cells, which included some 38 individual cases of violent jihadism, were studied to determine the tactics, techniques and procedures used by terrorists and terrorist groups. Using a frequency analysis, Clutterbuck and Warnes were able to produce tables of observable behaviors that might be used as behavioral anchors to be tested in future research. The research was conducted on cells in the United Kingdom; cultural differences between Muslims in the United Kingdom as opposed to American Muslims should be considered in terms of application of this study to the United States.

Behaviors noted in the radicalization process for the groups/individuals studied at a statistically significant rate are as follows (Clutterbuck & Warnes, 2011).

- Religiously observant
- Individuals collect violent jihadi material
- Individuals attend external study circles
- Individuals re-engage with “heritage religion”
- Individuals associate with radical preacher/imam
- Individuals collect money for the “Mujahideen”
- Individuals show preference for religious clothing
- Individuals described as religiously observant
- Individuals previous behavior at odds with strictures of Islam
- Individual associates with a small group of like-minded individuals
- An increase in religious intensity in an already religious individual

The relevance of this study is that observable behaviors within the radicalization process can be identified for purposes of countering radicalization. Further research in the United States should replicate this methodology using only U.S. HVE cases or all U.S. cases of terrorism since 9/11. It is important to note that radicalization of U.S. HVE do not always present through religiosity. During the terrorist attack planning and preparations stage, the Clutterbuck and Warnes study found the following five behavior patterns 100% of the time.

- Group/cell controlled by a motivated and connected leader
- Leader has previously been involved in violent jihad
- Group/cell acquisition or preparation of explosives
- Group/cell acquisition of premises
- Group/cell consideration of targets

Additionally, in this study, a category of behaviors that emerged from the overall data referred to as ‘transition to violent Jihad’, not directly related to preparation for and conducting terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom, revolved around travel to Pakistan and undergoing some form of training as follows.

- Group/cell connection to Al Qaeda in Pakistan
- Group/cell where members received violent jihad training in Pakistan
- Group/cell where members received violent jihad training with others in Pakistan

In most of the studies cited, verbal behavior indicative of increased ideological fervor, seeking of weapons or training and association of like-minded individuals or known extremist ideologues (if only via the Internet) are indicators of radicalization progress to mobilization of HVEs. Some of the behaviors cited in the Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman study, as well as the Clutterbuck et al., study could be noted in the case of the radicalization of Nidal Hasan and the Fort Hood shootings as per the following narrative.

## **9. Radicalization Narrative: Nidal Hasan, The Fort Hood Shootings**

On November 5, 2009, a lone attacker opened fire with a FN Herstal tactical pistol at the deployment center at Fort Hood, Texas (Gruen, 2010). The pistol was purchased at Guns Galore in August 2009. Thirteen DoD employees were killed and another 32 were wounded in the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil since September 11, 2001 (Lieberman, 2011). The person accused of the Fort Hood shooting spree, Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan, is a U.S. citizen. Although in hindsight, the process of his radicalization was evident; and information shared across disciplines might have averted this tragedy. A common understanding, policy and procedures are lacking for situations in which a U.S. citizen may be radicalizing. Further, the Constitution and Attorney General guidelines limit the actions that the government can take when a crime has not occurred.

Nidal Malik Hasan, born in Arlington, Virginia to Jordanian parents of Palestinian descent, graduated from Virginia Technical University with an engineering degree and began active duty with the U.S. Army in 1995. In 1997, he entered medical school at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), and graduated in 2003. From 2003 to 2007, he was a resident in the psychiatric program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and from 2007 to 2009, he was a fellow in a post-residency graduate program at USUHS. During his medical residency and post-residency fellowship, his



extremist views became evident to his superiors and colleagues. He clearly demonstrated signs of escalating radicalization. Witnesses reported that Hasan openly expressed support of principles of violent Islamic extremism during class presentations. He documented his support for radical Islam via written assignments and papers (Lieberman, 2011). In spite of his marginal to poor performance reviews and additional reports of unsettling behavior (absenteeism, poor rapport with patients and inappropriate discussion of religion), Hasan continued to be promoted through the military ranks. He was promoted to the rank of captain in 2003 and to major in 2009 (Gruen, 2010). Even though public and private signs of Nidal Hasan's radicalization were reported to his superiors, officials failed to intervene. His extremist behaviors and views were also obvious during his medical residency; actions were not taken to discipline or discharge him at that time either. The extremist behaviors and views expressed by Hasan caused concern for superiors and colleagues but were not documented. In the military culture, reporting such was viewed as politically incorrect (Lieberman, 2011). Hasan was praised for his research on violent Islamic extremism and his behaviors were rationalized based on the same. The attack at Fort Hood occurred four months after Hasan's arrival there. Hasan was scheduled to be deployed to Afghanistan on November 28, 2009 and had voiced his concern for fighting other Muslims (Gruen, 2010).

Nidal Hasan attended the Dar-al Hijrah mosque in Falls Church, Virginia during the time Anwar Al-Awlaki was an imam there; it is alleged that the two met there. Al-Awlaki was a U.S. citizen, and is reported to have served as an imam and "spiritual advisor" to 9/11 hijackers Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Midhar. Awlaki, associated with AQAP, fled to Yemen where he was killed in a drone strike in September 2011. AQAP and Awlaki had been linked to Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Nigerian who attempted to blow up the Detroit-bound Northwest Airlines Flight 253 on Christmas Day, 2009. Hasan is reported to have exchanged approximately 20 emails with Al-Awlaki, including a communication in which Hasan asked "whether killing American soldiers and officers is lawful or not..." (Gruen, 2010).

The communications between Hasan and Al-Awlaki were not ordinary for a military officer and piqued the interest of the FBI. The ensuing Joint Terrorism Task

Force (JTTF) inquiry focused only on the initial communications. The initial communications were dismissed as research on Islamic extremism due to the misleading reports praising Hasan's research (Lieberman, 2011). The DoD officials failed to share concerns of Hasan's peers and superiors regarding his escalating extremist behaviors and views with the FBI/JTTF. In the internal review of the shooting, the DoD referenced the Silber and Bhatt model of radicalization as one that it might best have consulted upon acknowledging missed cues presented by the accused Fort Hood shooter, Nidal Hasan (United States Department of the Army, 2010). Otherwise, the JTTF investigation might have gone further and the communications that Hasan had with Anwar Al-Awlaki might not have been dismissed.

In this case, the DoD lacked an understanding of the radicalization process, and therefore, missed indicators of radicalization in one of its soldiers. When assessing what it might have done differently in this situation, the DoD consulted the Silber and Bhatt model of radicalization to understand the radicalization process better. Per the previous section in this paper, it is now understood that the FBI/JTTF has yet another varietal understanding of the radicalization process. A common comprehension and guidelines for responding to this situation might have affected intervention and produced a different outcome.

### **C. ANALYSIS OF MACRO-LEVEL ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION PROCESS THEORIES**

Macro-level Islamic radicalization processes theories are primarily based on global sociological factors or conditions, which point to issues with Diaspora communities and grievances within the heritage country as manifested in the adopted country.

#### **1. Globalization**

"The wave of arrests and thwarted plots recently seen in the U.S. has severely undermined the long-held assumption that American Muslims, unlike their European counterparts, are virtually immune to radicalization" (Vidino, 2009). This premise is

based on the notion that European Muslims have not been well integrated, and are therefore, subject to discrimination and socio-economic disparity. This socio-economic disparity serves as fertile ground for the development of radical values, ideas and actions. The concept of globalization as a dynamic that contributes to radicalization is based on sociological and political science disciplines. The radicalization driven by globalization would, therefore, take a top-down trajectory, with global permissive factors and socio-political motivational framing.

The notion of globalization envisages open borders, and a global and widely integrated economy. In addition, modernization of transportation, communications, and international trade cause regional societies, economies and cultures to combine. As interdependent economies and cultures meld, cultural uniqueness is diminished. This diminishing cultural distinction conceptually spurs a loss of cultural identity; which, based on the social identity theory, can also be a factor that fuels radicalization. As discussed previously, social identity is an important factor in the radicalization process. Clearly, it has been established that no single factor, such as globalization and a resultant loss of cultural identity, will cause radicalization. However, by-products of globalization, such as diminished cultural identity in combination with other factors, can contribute to radicalization, which is particularly so when globalization results in marginalization and disenfranchisement of immigrants in their newly adopted homeland. Again, this situation is largely not the case with American Muslims.

Grievances from, or precipitating events in, the homeland of immigrants may spur feelings of alienation and contribute to radicalization. An absence of the cultural norms and traditions of the homeland may also cause feelings of isolation and cause social identity issues. The United Kingdom has typically seen more of these globalization issues in its Muslim population than has the United States. Geographic dispersion among American Muslim immigrants has presumably insulated them from the formation of extensive terrorist recruitment and propaganda networks, such as those developed in the United Kingdom. Moreover, large segments of the American Muslim population belong to ethnicities that have traditionally espoused moderate interpretations of Islam (Vidino, 2009).

Modernization of communications, in particular the Internet, allows an increased level of remote connections to the heritage country of immigrants and to the grievances of the heritage country. This modernization is a means by which globalization may assist the spreading of propaganda and the inspiration of violence. Therefore, the effects of globalization on Diaspora<sup>25</sup> Muslim communities, as it relates to radicalization, calls for further research and understanding.

It is important to note that religion, not ethnicity, defines many second- and third-generation Muslims (Hoffman et al., 2006). Poor integration can feed marginalization and disenfranchisement, which fuels the grievances of Diasporas. Diaspora communities have closer media connections to their heritage countries due to the modernization of communications; therefore, they are privy to “personalization” of news stories. They may personally know persons impacted by events reported widely in the media. In light of this, facilitation of the integration of Diaspora communities within the adopted or host country via active involvement as opposed to surveillance is important to counter-radicalization efforts. Diasporas experiencing isolation from the greater community and solidarity within the Diaspora community may act to create or influence social change. Such social movements can be peaceful or sometimes radical and may involve extremists and extremist tactics.

Consideration of globalization factors as contributing to violent Islamic radicalization also bears thought as to the possible sociological impact of resource mobilization theory. Resource mobilization theory from a sociological perspective emphasizes the ability of a social movement’s members to acquire resources and mobilize towards accomplishment of the movement’s goals. In the case of radicalization, one might then consider Al Qaeda and its affiliates as a social movement mobilizing or inspiring extremist beliefs and actions. Resource mobilization theory sees social movements as rational social institutions, created and populated by social actors with a goal of taking political action. In this paradigm, core Al Qaeda works towards bringing money, supporters, attention of the media, alliances with those in power, and refining the

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<sup>25</sup> Francois Haut defined Diaspora as referring to “the dispersion of any group and its people, that is, any group or community that can be defined and delineated.”

organizational structure. Social movements need the above resources to be effective, because dissent and grievances alone will not generate social change.

Both the rational choice and resource mobilization theories assume that the actors are rational; weighing the costs and benefits of the jihadist or other movement, participation and inspiring actions that benefit the movement whether psychologically (by instilling fear and bringing attention to the cause), or economically (by causing a government the expense of responding or safeguarding against the threat or action). This line of reasoning conflates with the notion of rational choice in executing terrorist acts as a tactic for producing desired outcomes.

From an economic or materialist perspective, the resource mobilization theory contends that collective action (radicalization towards terrorism) is a result of economic factors and organization theory. It argues that grievances are not a singular explanation for the creation of social/political movements. Those who control resources can inspire discontent and drive collective movements. From that perspective, access to and control over resources are crucial factors. The laws of supply and demand explain the ebb and flow of resources, and actions therein are accounted for by rational choice theory. In contrast, however, the confluence of the functions of rational choice theory with resource mobilization theory (from a sociological perspective) helps establish an understanding of how groups with limited resources can succeed in bringing social change under the circumstances of globalization, which include the dynamics of grievances, identity, culture and other divergent macro-sociological dynamics to include radicalization.

## **2. Diaspora**

Social scientists agree that Diaspora refers to groups of people who live in a foreign country but maintain a close relationship with their country of origin. For more information, see the works of Safran (1991), Clifford (1994), Cohen (1999), Krings (2003), and Mayer (2005) as cited by Waldmann (2010). Issues with the radicalization of Diaspora Muslim communities can be thought of as a subset of the globalization issues, which may spur or otherwise influence radicalization. While every migratory community cannot be termed a Diaspora, typically those immigrant communities dispersed from their

homeland, but that attempt to retain the ethnic group identity from the homeland and have a sense of solidarity within their community with idyllic remembrances of their homeland will be termed Diaspora communities (Waldmann, 2010). Diasporas, therefore, may be more susceptible to the influence of grievances from the host country and the heritage country as well. These grievances can fuel radicalization.

In their article, “*Islam in the West: The Threat of Internal Extremism*,” Muqtadar Khan and John Esposito site political and social grievances to include the 2001 war on Afghanistan, the “U.S.’s decreasing credibility as a broker of peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict,” and “the U.S. led invasion of Iraq [void of evidence of WMDs—the stated reason for the invasion] as contributing to an unprecedented amount of anger, frustration, resentment and anti-American feelings among Muslims everywhere.” Narrative from this article is much the same as the rhetoric used by Al Qaeda and other radical Islamists to fuel radicalization. Khan and Esposito espouse that three routes exist that Western societies can take concerning Western Muslim communities: marginalization, assimilation or accommodation. They cite the challenges and issues with each approach; marginalization disempowers the community and reduces its influences and rights; assimilation secularizes a community to the extent that the “difference does not make a difference,” and accommodation, being the preferred approach, would accommodate cultural and religious differences within the greater society (M. Khan & Esposito, 2005). The latter approach is considered less likely to contribute to grievances and potential radicalization.

Studies on Diaspora communities find that three principle forms of reactions to life in a host country exist. For more information, see the works of Cesari (2004), Tietze (2001), Roy (2003), and Schiffauer (2004) as cited by Waldmann, (2010). Those studies view the possible reactions of Diasporas as first, assimilation; secondly, a reconciling of the norms and cultural parameters of the heritage country with those of the host country, or finally, a ‘neo-traditionalism’, ‘neo-dogmatism’ or fundamentalism, which includes a rejection of the host society’s values and culture, while idealizing the values and culture of the heritage country (Waldmann, 2010). The latter of the three reactions might be indicated as a precursor to the radicalization process. Within the parameters of these

dynamics, Diaspora communities may provide fertile ground for recruitment to, or fundraising for extremist or fundamentalist groups from their homeland. They may also provide weapons or advocate for change in their homeland through the adopted or host government. A number of reactions might occur, which also supports the concept of the path to radicalization as diverse.

Diaspora extremists can be converts to Islam, or the heritage religion, second- or third-generation Diasporas, struggling to maintain or redefine their cultural identity, or first-generation immigrants struggling to fit within a new society (Hoffman et al., 2006). The grievances discussed in this paper can provide the cognitive openings for radicalization per Neumann as cited by Cutler (2011). Study and research on globalization and Diaspora as dynamics that may provide cognitive openings that fuel the radical narrative, and therefore, radicalization, suggest that these dynamics are best addressed with policy that counters and contests the radical narrative and demonstrates that the West is not at war with Islam. This facet of the study of the radicalization process identifies opportunities to engage with Diaspora Muslim communities in such fashion that does not express suspicion and does not imply surveillance but demonstrates partnership and collaboration.

#### **D. RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS**

The findings herein confirm wide agreement that no single prescribed path of radicalization exists. Further, upon review of the various process models and theories, it is understood that various factors and combinations thereof may contribute to the process of radicalization. Individual, social and global factors and grievances can carry more or less weight in any given case of radicalization. An understanding exists that not all radicalization ends in acts of terrorism. This study has also identified the criticality of the mobilization component of the radicalization process. It has identified behaviors and combinations of behaviors to be studied further as indicators of radicalization and mobilization leading to acts of terrorism. Perhaps one of the most salient concepts from a

review of the research is that radicalization is not indicated by a linear process. Various trajectories and dynamics within the framework of violent Islamic radicalization and mobilization occur.

In analyzing the various process theories, models and concepts, the complexity of the radicalization process is realized. Radicalization is not a simplistic process, but one that is multi-pronged. It is prudent to determine that solutions to this multi-pronged and complex issue will involve a multi-disciplinary approach to combating this wicked problem. Through greater understanding of the process and continued research, expertise will be improved as will the development and delivery of effective counter-radicalization strategies and measures. Reviewing lessons from abroad and applying smart practices to the development of policy amenable to the context of American society will facilitate effective addressing of the issue of homegrown violent extremism within the United States.

#### **E. LESSONS FROM ABROAD—COUNTERTERRORISM AND COUNTER-RADICALIZATION STRATEGY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

The counterterrorism strategy employed by the UK, “Contest,” is based on the four P’s as follows: 1) Prevent—make every effort to counter radicalization, 2) Protect—defend critical infrastructure and borders, 3) Prepare—contingency planning, develop attack response and, 4) Pursue—counter terrorism, detect, disrupt prosecute terrorists. For the purposes of this paper, the focus is on the ‘Prevent’ arm of the UK counterterrorism strategy to determine if smart practices or lessons learned can be applied to counter-radicalization strategy in the United States.

Prevent is the UK’s counter-radicalization strategy, which was initially comprised of the following objectives: 1) Fight for the hearts and minds of young Muslims in the United Kingdom through local and community engagement between government and the Muslim population, 2) Disrupt the activities of those who promote radicalization, 3) Counter the radical narrative, not only in words, but in actions and policy, in terms of economic policy and UK foreign policy toward the long-term prevention of radicalization, 4) Communicate with the Muslim community as a whole and not just the



religious community, which promotes inclusion as opposed to separating Muslims based on their religion, and 5) Freedom of worship is seen as important to countering misperceptions and Islamophobia, as part of the Prevent strategy as well (Great Britain Cabinet Office, 2009).

The Prevent strategy has not been without its criticisms. The initial Prevent strategy was revised to address its major criticisms and failings over time. The identification of specific communities in the context of Prevent was seen as counterproductive in that it implied “religionization” of British Muslims (Burkli, Bubbers, & Esenlik, 2011). Critics perceive the Prevent strategy as implicating failed integration (immigration policy) as a precipitator of radicalization. Originally introduced in 2003, Prevent first underwent a significant revision in March 2009 as part of the revision and implementation of a refined Contest II counterterrorism strategy. This revision included a specific Prevent policing strategy. The strategic revisions were based on the realization that the original Contest strategy significantly emphasized the Pursue strand of activity, but did not develop the Prevent strand of the counterterrorism strategy to its fullest potential (Innes, Roberts, Innes, Lowe, & Lakhani, 2011).

When reviewing a preventive or community policing strategy as a component of counter-radicalization strategy in the United States, it is important that law enforcement officials are appropriately informed as to the dynamics of the radicalization process. Counterterrorism strategy must be crafted broadly enough to allow for the necessary flexibilities in approach based on intelligence and emerging threats. The UK strategy was narrowly focused to the extent that it required revision as more was learned about terrorist tactics and radicalization. By developing a comprehensive understanding of the threat of radicalization in the U.S. a relevant policing strategy can be better focused.

The extent to which law enforcement professionals are able to identify radicalization factors and apply counter-radicalization measures in their daily activities will impact the effectiveness of the implementation of such a policing strategy. Policing strategies in the United States must accomplish balance with and also respect pertinent U.S. liberties, laws, and regulations. In the United States, domestic law enforcement activities must comport with Attorney General (AG) Guidelines for Domestic FBI

Operations and protect the rights and liberties of citizens under the U.S. Constitution. The AG guidelines protect citizens from investigations and collection and maintenance of information on U.S. persons solely for the purposes of monitoring activities protected by the First Amendment or the lawful exercise of other rights secured by the Constitution. Further prohibited under the AG Guidelines, U.S. laws and the Constitution, is the use of race by federal law enforcement agencies in policing activities. A balancing of the protection of the civil rights and liberties of U.S. persons with counter-radicalization measures is essential.

In terms of the evolution of the UK's Contest II program, it was revised to identify five main components and two supporting objectives for the Prevent program as follows.

- Challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices
- Disrupt those who promote violent extremism and support the places where they operate
- Support individuals vulnerable to recruitment, or who have already been recruited by violent extremists
- Increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism
- Address the grievances that ideologues are exploiting
- Develop supporting intelligence, analysis, and information
- Improve strategic communications

In practice, working towards those objectives pivoted around three main types of activity (Innes et al., 2011):

- Counter-radicalization—focuses upon inhibiting the spread and influence of extremist ideas both generally and in specific cases
- De-radicalization—involves acts to reduce the influence of extremist ideas where they have gained traction
- Community cohesion building—is focused upon increasing the resilience of communities so that they are less likely to be influenced by extremist views (Innes et al., 2011)

The program strategies evolved primarily to community building, for improved community resilience and countering the radical narrative. It is important for this research to analyze the evolution of the UK policy for challenges, efficacy, lessons-learned and

smart practices in counter-radicalization. However, noting the differences in governmental and societal structures and the demographics of the UK and U.S. Muslim populations, it is necessary to determine applicable concepts and practices for the United States.

The United Kingdom again determined the need for revision to the Prevent program and issued a revised program in June 2011. Within the overall framework of the newly revised 2011 Prevent strategy are the following three overarching objectives.

- “Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalization which we need to address” (Great Britain, 2011).

The objectives of the Prevent program have been tweaked away from a focus primarily on policing to more non-coercive methods of prevention through collaboration and community building.

The question now is how can the United States use the counter-radicalization policy experience of the United Kingdom to further its counterterrorism efforts? Heretofore, the United States has not had an overarching strategic approach to countering violent extremism. Violent extremism has been primarily addressed within the law enforcement arena in the United States (Carpenter, Levitt, Simon, & Zarate, 2010). The DOJ and the FBI have espoused a preventive approach to countering this complex threat and some U.S. state and local law enforcement agencies have notable preventive policing policies (Stainbrook, 2010). Those agencies interact with communities susceptible to the spread of the Islamic extremist ideology. The focus is not on criminal activity, but the possibility that criminal activity may occur.

Still, concerns with the preventive policing approach include perceived encroachment on the civil rights and liberties of citizens who have neither committed, nor intend to commit crimes. Another concern is the potential profiling of Muslim Americans by treating their communities as suspect absent an intelligence-based reason. These issues

prove perilous to the necessary partnership with Muslim Americans for addressing this issue. The largest American Muslim civil rights organization, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), condemned the FBI's use of "surveillance measures, particularly of mosques, predicated on the idea that Muslims present security concerns minus any suspicion of criminal activity" (Patel, 2011). Therefore, a common understanding of the radicalization process and a balanced approach to implementing counter-radicalization measures is ever so critical in a preventive policing program in the United States.

It has become apparent from the uptick in homegrown violent extremism in the United States that, like the United Kingdom, the United States needs a comprehensive counter-radicalization strategy. Heeding this need, in August 2011, the White House issued the *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* strategy document with a strategic goal and three areas of priority action for countering violent extremism. The U.S. counter-terrorism strategy now encompasses a blend of law enforcement response to incidents at the local level, some state and local community policing, and JTTF intelligence via state fusion centers, which involves local, state and federal entities. The *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* strategy document now adds a focused counter-radicalization strategy for the U.S. homeland.

The strategic goals and areas of priority action for countering violent extremism, as well as one of eight guiding principles, indicate the significance of this research as follows.

Our central goal in this effort is to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing, or recruiting individuals or groups in the United States to commit acts of violence. The U.S. Government will work tirelessly to counter support for violent extremism and to ensure that, as new violent groups and ideologies emerge, they fail to gain a foothold in our country. Achieving this aim requires that we all work together—government, communities, the private sector, the general public, and others—to develop effective programs and initiatives....There is no single issue or grievance that pushes individuals toward supporting or committing violence, and the path to violent extremism can vary considerably. As a result, it is essential that we empower local partners,

who can more readily identify problems as they emerge and customize responses so that they are appropriate and effective for particular individuals, groups, and locations...(The White House, 2010).

The three areas of priority are listed as follows, with the second priority being a central theme of this research.

1. Enhancing federal engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists
2. Building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism
3. Countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals

Eight guiding principles for implementing the U. S. strategy are listed in the document, and within the guiding principles rest the crux of this research as follows. “We must continually enhance our understanding of the threat posed by violent extremism and the ways in which individuals or groups seek to radicalize Americans, adapting our approach as needed. As al-Qaida and its affiliates and adherents increasingly aim to inspire people within the United States to commit acts of terrorism.... [we must continue] increasing our understanding of the factors that lead individuals to turn to violence, and calibrating our efforts (Obama Administration, 2011).” This research supports priority area number two above by identifying the basis from which to build government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism.

Of significance is that this strategy is not completely focused on law enforcement, which is an acknowledgement that “none of the instruments of counter-radicalization are coercive. Counter-radicalization is not primarily a law enforcement tool...” (Neumann, 2011) and is an important concept in terms of the foundational arguments of this paper. Counter-radicalization must be addressed with a policy that addresses grievances. It is essential to continue to support and spread the narrative that the West is not at war with Islam. That narrative must be proliferated through the voices of American Muslims; it cannot simply be a government slogan. U.S. strategies, policies and practices must reflect

that idea. Policies cannot treat the Muslim community as a whole as suspect. Through appropriate partnership and collaboration with the Muslim community, extremists must be challenged and called out, or otherwise exposed and expelled.

The foundation of meeting these challenges is to educate homeland security professionals appropriately on the complexities of the radicalization process. Putting forth a comprehensive model, which facilitates that education, is the first step to fulfilling the objective of “building government and law enforcement expertise in preventing violent extremism.” A comprehensive model of the radicalization process can inform not only training and development of expertise in the subject matter, but also preventive policies, interdiction procedures and other counter-radicalization measures.

#### **F. RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS FOR COMPREHENSIVE MODEL/Framework**

A comprehensive radicalization process model should both include recognition of, and compel a heightened understanding of the dynamics of personal and social/collective identities, socio-political, religious and ideological factors to inform training and policy within the homeland security enterprise. It should encompass precipitant and permissive factors that spur or catalyze radicalization, as well as those factors that may inhibit the process. The ideal model or framework will illustrate that not all extremists progress through the radicalization process to the operational stage, and end at terrorism. An optimal framework will, therefore, view the point in the process in which capabilities enhancement and training occur as a secondary cycle. A comprehensive framework will include tipping points or indicators that radicalization has progressed to the point of operationalizing and progressing to possible terrorism. The NCTC Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework not only comports with those criteria, but also appropriately illustrates the mobilization cycle as a secondary cycle of the radicalization process.

The ideal framework will emphasize that no demographic terrorist profile exists. Profiling terrorists on the basis of race, ethnicity and religion gives rise to valid civil liberties concerns. Behavioral profiling is a legitimate means for identifying interdiction

opportunities within the radicalization process, and appropriately preserves the civil liberties of citizens. Distinct observable behaviors presented during the process of radicalization, and particularly during mobilization should be researched further to promote the research and development of effective counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism policies and practices in the future.

## **G. SUMMARY—NEW FRAMEWORK**

President Obama outlined the expected U.S. approach to countering violent Islamic radicalization in his speech in Cairo in June 2009. He clearly stated that America is not at war with Islam and that message should be carried clearly, not only by the government but by American Muslims as well. The speech characterized U.S. efforts to defend and protect the rights of American Muslims. The need for partnership in combating the radical narrative by both non-Muslims and Muslims as an integral component of the strategy was emphasized. Another critical strategic component mentioned was partnering with the Muslim community to ensure successful integration so that all Americans can realize the freedoms and privileges that America has to offer. U.S. policies and procedures should not disenfranchise all American Muslims due to the extremist activities of a minority of Muslims.

The President also spoke to the National Security Strategies that are important for improving America's relationship with Islam in that speech in Cairo (Obama Administration, 2009). This speech provided broad direction for U.S. counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization strategies. The 2011 Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States strategy document provides specific direction for the U.S. counter-radicalization program. The second of the three priorities of that strategy is, "building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism." A common understanding of the radicalization process will inform training and build the expertise necessary for preventing violent extremism in the United States. The NCTC Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework (Figure 5) comprehensively captures the radicalization process and is the appropriate model from which to build expertise across the homeland security enterprise.

The NCTC Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework is the ideal process model from which to train and educate, as well as inform counter-radicalization policy throughout the homeland security enterprise. It appears appropriate that the homeland security enterprise would be consumers of the intelligence-based framework developed by the NCTC. Based on the research, behavioral, political, psychological and sociological motivators may present or serve as indicators of radicalization. Minimally, some of those characteristics might facilitate or motivate progress on the pathway to violent radicalization. If these identifiable behavioral characteristics and situational circumstances occur with consistency in cases of violent extremist radicalization, the possibility exists to identify tipping points at which violent radicalization intervention efforts might be most effective. With the development of a sound model of the process of violent radicalization, points at which intervention may best be applied can be identified. The NCTC Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework has been developed with an understanding as to how these factors are involved in the violent Islamic radicalization process and is the ideal framework from which to develop expertise, strategy and policy.



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## V. CONCLUSIONS

Counter-radicalization is a policy theme, not a single policy. It is delivered through multiple channels. The range of relevant activities is potentially unlimited, but typically involves messaging; engagement and outreach; education and training; and capacity-building. (Neumann, 2011)

### A. RADICALIZATION PROCESS RELEVANCE TO COUNTER-TERRORISM

Clearly messaging, engagement, outreach, education and training and capacity-building must be part of the “counter-radicalization policy theme” of the United States. This research focuses primarily on the education and training components of the theme. The crux of this research posits developing the radicalization expertise of homeland security professionals as the cornerstone of the necessary counter-radicalization theme. By beginning with the development of a thorough and common understanding of this phenomenon as a basis for informing training, messaging, engagement and outreach, as well as capacity building; effective counter-radicalization in the United States can best be achieved. The NCTC Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework is a comprehensive tool from which to begin that process.

Upon analysis of the literature and previous research on radicalization process theories and open source data of relevant cases of homegrown Islamic radicalization in the West, the comprehensive model of the violent Islamic radicalization process was identified as the NCTC Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework. This framework accomplishes a synthesis of contributions identified from previous research and current intelligence analysis. This framework also establishes a basis for current actions and strategies, as well as provides a basis for further research in this area of study. Future research should validate or test the NCTC framework and further its use with the addition of identifiable behaviors that may be observed within the various spheres within the framework. This framework for common understanding best conceptualizes the violent Islamic radicalization process. It will facilitate the identification of tipping points, or opportunities within the process at which prevention or intervention is best suited.

Those points in the process will identify how, when, or where to focus policy and strategies for intervention. The NCTC framework establishes that basis. By adding instruction as to where specific and observable behaviors may be presented within the model, homeland security professionals can glean opportunities within the radicalization process that can be exploited for purposes of interdiction, intervention and prevention.

The steps planned for this research included analyzing the process factors identified in previous research, and incorporating them into a comprehensive model for understanding. The NCTC model was identified as the optimal framework for use across the homeland security enterprise using appreciative inquiry by way of a comparative content analysis. The narratives of homegrown violent extremists contained within this report provides glimpses of motivational and situational factors common in cases involving homegrown/self-radicalized terrorists; and includes analysis of similar behavioral cues/characteristics displayed by extremists prior to committing a violent act. The process models were analyzed based on the approach: top-down/macro, blended/mid-level, or bottom-up/micro perspective, contributions and limitations to the understanding of the radicalization process.

The research writ large finds no single pathway or road map from radicalization to terrorism. Therefore, a single comprehensive model with a specified sequence or series of prescriptive steps is not practicable. A theoretical framework, which describes the structures, systems, concepts or situations supporting the radicalization process is practicable. A framework that considers the diverse and complex dynamics of the individual, groups, grievance and permissive and precipitant circumstances must be contextually considered. The Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework developed by the NCTC encompasses the needed concepts, factors and dynamics necessary to train and facilitate comprehensively a better understanding of the violent Islamic radicalization process. This framework can and should be used to inform training, policy, strategy and tactical measures to counter radicalization throughout the homeland security enterprise.

Further, the identification of a government agency accountable for the overarching counter-radicalization strategy and policy implementation, as well as

interagency coordination in the United States would better focus efforts and manage stakeholder relationships. The NCTC includes a “global engagement group” responsible for informing, enabling, and supporting government efforts to counter radicalization (Carpenter et al., 2010), it is ripe for undertaking a share of these critical responsibilities. The NCTC might best lead the charge of counter-radicalization strategy in the United States. With appropriate training and guidance on the dynamics and trending of radicalization, current efforts by law enforcement entities to liaison with Muslim communities to both counter the radical narrative and interdict terrorist plots by radicalized citizens should continue and expand. These entities should collaborate and partner with the Muslim American community to contest and counter the radical narrative with diplomacy, engagement and counter messaging.

## **B. BASIS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study establishes the basis for further research for the development of specific counter-radicalization measures based on behavioral profiling. By beginning with the NCTC Radicalization and Mobilization Dynamics Framework and identifying behaviors or combinations of behaviors associated with the radicalization and mobilization cycles, those behaviors may serve as the focus of countermeasures. Counter measures should clearly focus on behaviors as indicators of radicalization. By focusing countermeasures to include law enforcement actions, on anomalous combinations of behaviors as opposed to religious or ethnic characteristics of individuals, a balanced approach to counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism is certain to be maintained that is free from ethnic or religious profiling. Developing counter measures balanced with a respect for civil rights and liberties is of critical importance in the United States and religious and ethnic profiling must clearly be avoided. Counter measures cannot be initiated based on criteria in violation of the civil rights of citizens.

The Clutterbuck and Warnes, as well as the Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman studies, provide a sampling of behaviors presented at a statistically significant rate during the radicalization process cycle. The Clutterbuck and Warnes study also provides a sampling of behaviors present at a statistically significant rate (see the attack planning

and preparation and the transition to violent jihad stages, (Clutterbuck & Warnes, 2011)) during the mobilization cycle of the radicalization and mobilization process. The Silber and Bhatt study validates some of those behaviors in the jihadization phase identified in that study, per Figure 3. Further, the FBI model presented in Figure 4 validates the behaviors found in the indoctrination and action phases of that model. The apex of the model included in the Cozzens study per Figure 1 also includes behaviors typical during mobilization.

The basis of further research regarding opportunities for disruption of the radicalization and mobilization process cycles can be found in the Musa and Bendett study per Figure 7. Being mindful of the process of radicalization and mobilization, several recent events should be interpreted as potential precipitants of radicalization and extremism including the killing of Osama bin Laden, Anwar Al-Awlaki and Samir Khan, as well as the recent report of an operational U.S. drone base in Ethiopia (as it relates to Al-Shabaab and U.S. Somali Diaspora) (Whitlock, 2011). With those precipitants in mind, it is ever important to improve the understanding of the violent Islamic radicalization process. By establishing a process framework that assists in the development of that knowledge, effective counter-radicalization measures, methods and policies can be crafted.

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